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THE SOVIET CAUCASUS

by

DAVID TUTAEFF

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TO

MY FATHER

AND OTHERS WHO DID NOT LIVE TO SEE

THE DAWN OF LIBERTY IN THEIR LAND

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The map showing the oil areas of the Caucasus and the Middle East is reproduced by the permission of Dr. Tokayer, of the Petroleum Press Bureau. I am particularly indebted to Dr. Tokayer for his patience and advice during the preparation of the chapter on Soviet Oil.

D. T.

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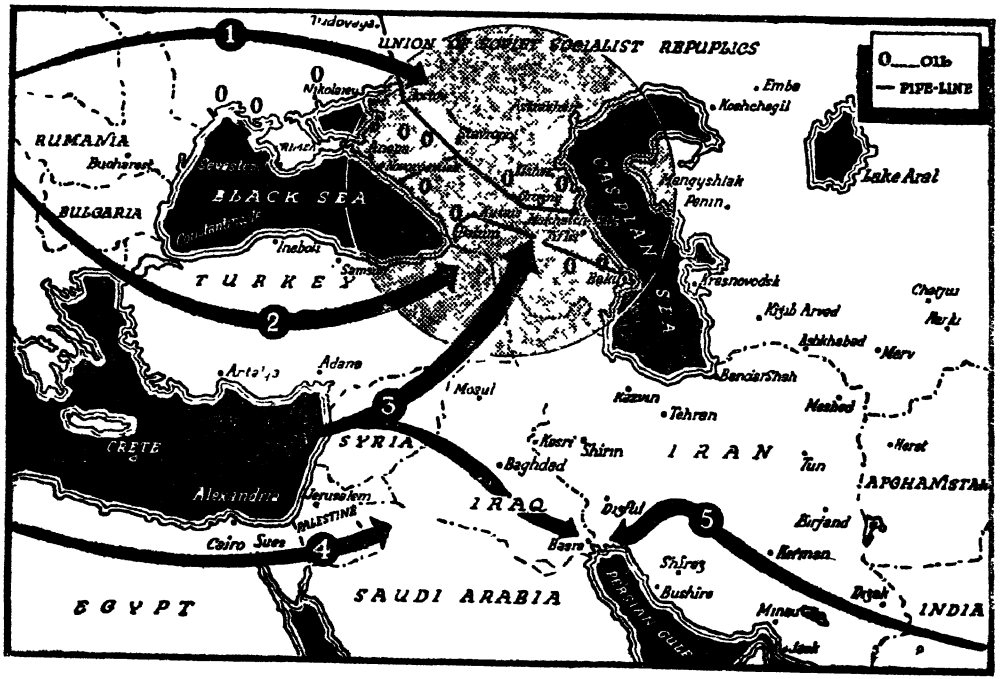

The Soviet Caucasus and the Middle East

Chapter I

WHY THE CAUCASUS ?

Spread before the would-be masters of the world is the map you see opposite. It tells a story and a stratagem not only to generals, statesmen, and armchair tacticians but to every man and woman who has read the word "Caucasus" in a newspaper headline. Why the Caucasus ?

Geography plays its part in the remorseless repetition of history. Principalities, powers, and systems pass, but the mountains stand. Situated in the heart of the land-mass we call the three continents of Europe, Asia, and Africa, the Caucasus commands a strategic position which has been noted on vellum, papyrus, and clay. Alexander, Pompey, Ghengis Khan, and now Hitler have all put their finger on the 900-mile stretch of mountains and asked themselves the same question: "After this—the world ?"

"A FINGER POINTING TO ASIA"

This apt description of the crooked Apsheron Peninsula on which Baku stands was given by Chicherin, the Soviet Commissar for Foreign Affairs from 1918 to 1930. Besides being a wit, Chicherin was a remarkably astute statesman. The phrase he uttered some twenty years ago has even greater significance to-day.

But Baku, the Caucasus, is not only a signpost to India. It stands significantly between the Western and Eastern halves of the British Empire. It commands the Middle

East, the oilfields of Mosul and Iran, as well as its own immense petroleum resources. Following on the map the five-prong drive of the Axis, we see where it begins—and where the Nazis and the Japanese hope it will end.

No matter whether we look from right to left or left to right or whether we turn the map upside down, the Caucasus looms large in Axis calculations. One of the punches at the Allies' solar plexus was parried by the victorious Red Army at Rostov (numbered 1 in the map) in December 1941. All reports indicate that another attempt will be made soon. The sparring match on the sands of Libya between the Afrika Korps and British and Imperial troops held up the second thrust (4). Two other prongs (2 and 3) are pointed, a perpetual Damoclean threat, towards Turkey, Palestine, and Syria; and the Japanese are threatening India (5). The atmosphere is charged with attack.

Even an astrologer can safely prophesy that in the near future the Caucasus will be hitting the headlines again. The battle for the oilfields, frustrated in 1941, will, in the jargon of the stars, 'take a new turn.' The reader could have guessed as much.

PETROL OR CHAMPAGNE ?

In 1941 nearly the whole of the grape harvest of France was taken by Hitler, not to celebrate his 'final' annihilation of the Red Army, but to turn the barrels of Beaujolais and Veuve Clicquot into motor-alcohol to feed the excessive thirst of the Panzers.

Hitler would laugh at the innocence of the fifteenth-century traveller, Josaphat Barbaro, who found a mountain in the Caucasus "that casteth forth blacke oyle stynkeng

horryblye." The 30,780,000-ton production of petroleum of the Caucasian oilfields, representing about 80--85 per cent. of the total oil production in the Soviet Union, is a prize which exceeds every strategic merit.

Before examining Hitler's oil position, however, it is necessary to bear in mind that ***although the occupation of the Caucasus and its oilfields by Germany would be of small immediate benefit to the enemy, it would nevertheless represent a calamitous if by no means fatal blow to the Soviet Union***. Not only would the highly mechanized forces of the Red Army suffer, but also the agricultural usefulness of the Soviet Union's half-million motor-tractors.

The time-honoured game of juggling with Germany's oil reserves is a dangerous one. It has sent too many people into dreams of wishful thinking to be repeated at this stage of our affairs. Wasn't it Mark Twain who said that "there are liars, goddamn liars, and statisticians"?

The figures shown below are the most accurate available. Although two years old, they serve as an adequate guide—for what Germany has lost on the swings she has gained on the roundabouts. If Rumanian oil production is down this year, then it is pretty certain that there has been a corresponding increase in synthetic production.

Diagnosed, these figures reveal a German headache. But that does not mean angina pectoris—a gasping for air—or oil.

THE AXIS OIL POSITION (EXCLUDING JAPAN)
ESTIMATED PRODUCTION 1940

	Metric Tons
1. Crude oil	
Greater Germany ...	... 1,100,000
German-occupied Poland..,	.., 130,000

Hungary	235,000
Albania	225,000
Rumania	6,000,000
France	70,000
	7,760,000
2. Benzol, alcohol, etc.	1,000,000
3. Tar oils	600,000
4. Synthetic fuels	3,200,000
Total ...	12,560,000

As it stands, this figure of 12,560,000 means nothing to the lay mind. For example, the Rumanian figure of six million does not represent that amount of ***motor-fuel***. It represents a total output of ***crude oil***, which is quite a different thing. The actual motor-fuel is approximately 25 per cent. or about 1,500,000 tons. On the other hand, Germany's home-made synthetic produce of 3,200,000 tons is all motor-fuel. This is a very important consideration and forbids any wild hope that Germany will collapse "on her own accord through lack of oil."

We must also bear in mind the stocks of oil which she looted when she put "Occupied" to Europe.

We can set on the debit side, however, the thorough pasting given by the R.A.F. to the gigantic synthetic plant at Leuna and other plants at Hamburg, Bremen, and Duisburg; nor must we forget that the Red Air Force by its attacks on the Ploesti oilfields has embarrassed and reduced Rumanian oil production.

Nazi Germany's answer to the oil war has been to economize. Civilian consumption in Occupied Europe has been reduced to 20 per cent. of pre-war consumption

in some petroleum products. But again this figure is variable. Germany will not hesitate to make further economies if they are necessary. Also, it is significant that German generals have issued stringent orders " for the punishment of soldiers and drivers who use petrol in their cigarette-lighters." A small thing, no doubt the reader will say. But German organization concentrates on the small things, knowing that they represent big totals. Stationary motors, military and civilian, are forbidden to keep their engines turning. Lorries are sent laden to the Eastern Front. Their return journey is made by rail on giant trucks. Lubricating oil is strictly economized. To regain waste oil, collections are made not only from railway, shipping, and industrial machinery, but every used oil-rag is gathered and carefully squeezed.

It remains only to say that the United States, U.S.S.R., and Venezuela account for over 80 per cent. of world oil production. Providing the Allies can keep their centres of production intact, their oil position is secure. Britain, the Empire, and the Allies are served by the greatest tanker fleet in the world.

But what balanced conclusion can we draw from these facts and figures, or, rather, what conclusion does Hitler draw ?

(1) That while Germany has sufficient stocks to continue fighting in Europe for some considerable time, she must, if she is to wage a victorious war, attack those areas that would provide her with a superabundance of petroleum, of motor-fuel, kerosene (for lighting and as a solvent in industry), gas-oil for Diesel engines, lubricating oil, paraffin-wax, asphalt, petroleum coke.

(2) By keeping the Germans away from the rich oil-bearing areas of the Caucasus and the Middle East, it may be possible for the Allies to repeat Lord Curzon's famous dictum of 1918 that " the Allies reached victory on a torrent of oil."

GOD'S MAGINOT LINE

The word 'Maginot' has passed into history, and obloquy it seems, despite the good intention of Monsieur Maginot himself.

But the Caucasus, stretching as foothills from the Peninsula of Kerch, in the Crimea, runs for 900 miles to the shores of the Caspian and there merges into the high plateaus of Iran. To claim that the Caucasus is unconquerable is to go against all the evidence of history. But to say that it has tried and defeated many invaders is quite another thing.

The river and the desert have proved no obstacle to mechanized warfare. But no campaign of modern time has been fought amongst mountains higher and less intersected with passes than the Alps. Where the mountains are smaller and not so inaccessible as the Caucasus, General Mihailovich and his Yugoslav Chetniks have been able to put up a memorable resistance.

True, the great oilfields are not situated among the crags. True, the coast of the Black Sea, while often jutting into the sea in great 6,000-foot precipices, also provides comparatively flat if narrow plains, especially around Batum, the terminus of the double pipe-line from Baku.

The Scythians, the Golden Horde, and many other invaders from Asia discovered not only the 'Gate of Gates'

at Derbend on the Caspian which leads to a comparatively level stretch before Baku, but also the high Daryal Pass which opens access into the heart of the Caucasus. It is noteworthy that in the 400-mile stretch of mountains—the shortest distance between the Black Sea and the Caspian—there are no passes less than 9000 feet high.

The rivers Rion and Kura flow through a fertile trough of land inhabited by Georgians and other Caucasian races. To the north-west stretch giant peaks, often higher than Mont Blanc, higher than the Rockies themselves; whole ridges are well over 14,000 feet. The 'V' made by the railways serves as an excellent topographical guide.

But the Caucasus is more than a pawn in the strategy of contending nations and ideas. If we consider only its rivers and its mountains, its wealth of mineral resources, we shall know but a quarter of its enthralling story. For the true story of the Caucasus is as old as the world itself—the story of a struggle for human freedom. By thinking upon the past and considering the present, we may also, perhaps, look into the dimmer caverns of the future.

———:o:———

Chapter II

THE LAND OF GOG AND MAGOG

Where did the Caucasians come from ? These men of countless races and many tongues who gave their collective name to that branch of *homo sapiens* which wears a white skin ?

Intriguing theories exist. But confusion has been added by the tidal waves of history which have passed over the mountains, leaving a fantastic ' wash ' of nations behind. Who shall assert where legend ends and fact begins ? No matter. The facts are as astonishing as the legends. The old chroniclers of Georgia, the annalists, maintain that the original dwellers of the Caucasus were descended from Togarmah, the giant son of Japheth. The Kartlins, a branch of Eastern Georgians, carry the name of Kartlos, one of the eight sons of Togarmah. Open the Bible at Ezekiel, chapter xxxviii, and read:

> And the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him,
>
> And say, Thus saith the Lord God ; Behold, I am against thee, O Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal ;
>
> And I will turn thee back, and put hooks into thy jaws, and I will bring thee forth, and all thine army, horses and horsemen, all of them clothed with all sorts of armour, even a great company with bucklers and shields, all of them handling swords :
>
> Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya with them; all of them with shield and helmet :

Gomer, and all his bands; the house of Togarmah of the north quarters, and all his bands; and many people with thee.

Historians have deduced from this mention of armour and bucklers and shields that the use of metal, especially of bronze, probably originated in the Caucasus, the land of Gog and Magog of the Israelites.

Still clinging to Biblical tales, there is one which even in recent times was hallowed and told to little children (and others simple enough to believe it). There, on the crest of Mount Ararat, I used to be told, stands a strange, fossilized shape. Few have seen it. But those that have declare that it is the Ark in which Noah and his sons, together with his cargo of animals, escaped the wrath of God. Believe it or not.

The archaeologist is a much more reliable guide to the ancient past than an old wives' tale. Recently his spade brought to light many objects which suggest that there were kingdoms in the Caucasus which flourished in the times of Babylon and Nineveh. An exquisite goblet was recently found—not dissimilar to the one described by Homer, "And in the dazzling goblet laughed the wine," from which Nestor drank. With the goblet were found necklaces, banners, arms, and ceramics of such workmanship that one might say beautiful things were made in the Caucasus before the Golden Age of Greece.

PROMETHEUS, THE FIRST BOLSHEVIK

The cradle of Hellenic mythology was the Caucasus. Here, they say, Zeus chained Prometheus to a rock for daring to steal fire from heaven for the sons of man.

Such Bolshevism Zeus would not tolerate. But Prometheus, despite his torments, laughed at the old gods and their ways.

An echo of Hitler, perhaps, the would-be-Zeus, comes in Shelley's lines :

> Leave Hell's secrets half unchanted
> To the maniac dreamer ; cruel
> More than ye can be with hate
> Is he with fear.

I lived under the shadow of Mount Kazbek, the place where legend pinned Prometheus. Laden with chains, the Titan has grown old, they say ; but not his defiance nor his faith in man. A mountain troubadour, well filled with wine, will tell how, climbing Mount Kazbek, he came upon the rebel. " Is the Caucasus the grave of conquerors still ?" Prometheus asks. "Are new cities being built, and the children—do they go to schools ?"

Centuries passed before Prometheus had the answer he so eagerly desired. He need no longer wonder whether it was worth defying the gods for a worthless posterity. To-day he can look out from his lonely crag and see the water being turned into electricity, white cities taking the place of the ramshackle old ones, children crowding into schools and young men into universities, and the many races of the Caucasus living in friendship and in peace.

THE TALLEST TRAVELLER'S YARN IN HISTORY

Another story. This time about Jason and the Argonauts who came in search of the Golden Fleece to Colchis, the Black Sea littoral of Georgia. He claimed

that he saw sheep with golden wool. To prove the yarn, he brought a shimmering skin to Greece.

But Jason was no chemist. How was he to know that the sheep of Georgia had rambled through the mountain torrents and streams, and that their wool had caught small particles of alluvial gold ?

Here, too, in the northern Caucasus was the land of the terrible Amazons, the one-breasted women who drew the bow farther than any man. These matriarchs, killers of male children, were the terror of the ancient world.

Alexander the Great and his Macedonians occupied the Caucasus before continuing on their way to India.

Pompey came, but turned back after an unsatisfactory campaign. All he left was his name and the number of his legion carved on a high rock. Centuries later a comedy ensued when a boastful and vainglorious Russian general climbed the same crag and thought to perpetuate his name and that of his Empire by writing on the rock. He paraded his whole army, but shamefaced engineers pointed to the Roman inscription. The general went away in a huff.

The riches of the Caucasus attracted Roman greed. Settlements and cultural outposts of Greek and Roman settlers sprang up on the Euxine (Black Sea) littoral of ancient Georgia. They built their circuses and baths and temples in the narrow lowlands. But the Caucasian mountaineers, the freemen of the hills, laughed at the dictates of Caesar, and refused to be carried in chains to Rome. The Emperor Trajan established his rule in part of the Caucasus in A. D. 114.

Strabo, the Greek writer, it seems, investigated the fable of the Golden Fleece with a more scientific mind. He

had himself probably gone woolgathering, and his disappointment is evident when he says, "The streams were rich in gold which is washed out by the barbarians by means of pierced hides and skins with the hair on, and in this way has arisen the tale of the Golden Fleece."

Some hunters of linguistic curiosities maintain that the present-day Kubachi are descended from the Roman settlers. The word ***nussa***, for example, is sufficiently close to the Latin ***nos*** and the French ***nous*** to interest the credulous. There are other words like ***ule*** near enough to *l'œil* with which to speculate. Like the Romans, the Kubachi were expert armourers, and when they fought they used a sword not unsimilar in shape to the short Roman ***gladius***.

THE CONQUERORS

The Georgians strove for their freedom with a sense of humour the British would appreciate. They guyed the Persians and the Turks before they went into battle, and their Minister of Information was always a jester.

The list of invaders is a long one. They have contributed to this strange amalgam of nations in the Caucasus. Raids and border battles and constant struggle against strong foes and great empires threw strange leaven into the hills.

When the capital of the Roman Empire was moved from Rome to Constantinople the precarious inheritance of the Caucasus went to the Emperors of Byzantium. The conversion of the small kingdom of Georgia to Christianity came in the fourth century A. D. before St. Augustine preached the Word in England and some five centuries

before a Russian Grand Duke baptized his subjects wholesale in a river.

The Caucasus, placed between two seas, was a natural barrier guarding the south from the north and the north from the south. The restless tribes from the Central Asian plains—the Mongols, Kazars, and Alans—hammered persistently at its gates. The Persians, seeking to secure their northern frontiers, invaded the Caucasus in A. D. 318 and by a strange stroke of fate it was a Persian general who built the future capital of the Georgians—Tiflis.

The Arabs came in the seventh century, carrying the sword of Islam and repudiating the fire-worship or Mazdaism of the Persians. Oddly enough, the 'fire-blossoms' the Persians worshipped were lit by the natural oils of the Caucasus. The Persian word ***mazda***, meaning 'light,' remains as the name of a well-known brand of electric bulb.

The Arabs found the sword a poor argument to turn the Christian Georgians and Armenians to Islam. They made peace with the Caucasians, some of whom they managed to convert. This question of religion is important, for it plays a savage role throughout the whole of the history of the Caucasus. But, religion apart, the Arabs knew that by holding the passes of the Caucasus in the north they held the key to the great Silk Road that ran from China, India, Central Asia to the Black Sea, from whence the rich merchandise could be shipped to Venice, France and Spain.

BAD SAILORS—THEY NAMED A SEA

The restless nomads of the north—the Huns, Avars, and Alans—periodically smashed through the flood-gates

into the Caucasus. They came to ravage, pick up handsome wives, and filch fat cattle. The mountains held many of them up in some lost valley where they have remained to this day. They added further confusion, another tongue, another shape of head. But it was the Kazars who were a constant trouble to the Caucasus from the sixth century onward. They were hardy foemen, well armed and disciplined, dwelling in stone cities not far from present-day Astrakhan.

But the Kazars were bad sailors, and the Arabs, from pure derision, called the sea round which they dwelt, the "Kazar Sea." The horse was their weapon, and speed and terror were the means of conquest, not the ships the Arabs loved so much.

The Kazar tongue was akin to Turkish. Although Mongol by descent, they had embraced the Jewish faith, one of the strangest conversions in history, surely. A legend explains that their great Kaghan had once come upon some Jews using an instrument which was unfamiliar to him—an abacus.

He was fascinated by the speed with which Jews were able to add up their costs and profits and decided that if the Jews were clever enough to use such an instrument and to profit by it, he too would become a Jew.

The Kazars disappeared before the attacks of the Dukes of Kiev in the tenth century, and melted away either into the deserts of Central Asia or into the mountains of the Caucasus. Some became Mohammedans ; a few retained their Jewish faith. But the language they speak today is neither Kazar nor even Hebrew. It is an old Persian dialect.

Thirty years after William the Conqueror had landed in Britain the rumble of the First Crusade was heard in distant Georgia. The Seljuk Turks, who had ousted the Arabs as a dominant power in the Caucasus, hastened to shield Jerusalem from the gathering forces of Christendom. The Georgians were not slow to seize this unique opportunity. Flying the banner of David II, surnamed the Restorer, they began the systematic liberation of their country.

Of David II himself, the chroniclers say, "There was no one his equal in weighing the actions of men and discerning their qualities. He was gracious . . . in his intercourse, gentle in his words, and stimulating in his silence. . . . And he never embarrassed a man of good intent." But they add, ". . . without speaking of some actions in his youth, which God himself has forgotten, the truth is that, gentle as he was, he was a past master of guerrilla warfare." Slowly but surely he reconquered a territory that stretched from the Black Sea to the Caspian, and united large parts of Armenia to his kingdom.

Christian and Moslem lived in peace under his rule. He was wise enough to reverence the Koran. He argued frequently on abstruse theological problems with the Imans, the priests of Islam, giving, it was said, rich bounties to the needy and to singers of rare songs.

But the family of Bagrationi, which traced its descent from King David and Bathsheba, which ruled Georgia for 1200 years was to throw up an even greater personality than the Restorer, a woman. Her name was Tamara. Like few queens, she is surnamed "the Great."

THE ELIZABETH OF GEORGIA AND HER SHAKESPEARE

We are powerless without fate's command.
What I wish I have not,
What I possess I do not like.
The world is like twilight, everything tends to decline,
The jug pours out only what it contains.

These words were written by Shota Rustaveli. His name and his works may find no echo in English hearts. The world knows little of Rustaveli and the poems of his genius. For Georgia is only a small corner of the globe, and the hammers of time have not beaten her name into the minds of men. Yet to-day in Georgia, Rustaveli's poem, ***The Man in the Panther Skin***, is regarded as one of their foremost pieces of literature. Perhaps the secret lies in the fact that Georgian language has changed little since the twelfth century when this poem was written.

Curiously enough, the life of Rustaveli is as mysterious as that of Shakespeare. No one knows where he was born or where he died. But perhaps the legends which have grown around his name whisper more beautifully than the truth.

No man loved life and good wine more than Shota Rustaveli. He travelled widely, visited seminaries and those hills of Athos and Olympus, honeycombed with monasteries. He was as chivalrous and as brave as the characters in his poems. Biographers, anxious to cap a good tale, maintain that he wrote his masterpiece in honour of Queen Tamara. Some even say that he was her lover ; others, with more pedantic subtlety, suggest

he was nothing more than her companion and adviser. What does it matter ? His poems were recited not only in Georgia but as far as the bazaars of Delhi and Egypt. His glory is silent, perhaps, because no Fitzgerald has translated his peerless " Rubaiyat," although a masterly and fascinating translation exists in English done by Miss Marjorie Wardrop.

He lived in the heyday of Georgia's brief Renaissance. It is said that when, in 1179, Giorgi III made his daughter Tamara co-ruler Rustaveli returned from his travels and was given a court appointment, a sinecure which enabled him to devote himself to literature. Whether Tamara followed his good advice or not, she must have taken to heart his many admonitory verses.

" The jug pours out only what it contains," said Rustaveli. But Tamara was clever enough to turn the jug into a cornucopia out of which came just laws, a strong government, toleration and justice such as Georgia had not known for many years. Although a Georgian queen, she did not favour the Georgians above any other race in her domain. Armenians and Mussulmans, all were equal in her sight.

Perhaps this is why they called her age the Golden. Soon after her death and in the long centuries which ensued, the Caucasians forgot her precepts, and grew quarrelsome and overbearing. Their lack of unity was a factor which contributed to much unhappiness and misfortune even up to recent times—before, that is, the formation of the Soviet Republics.

Tamara was by no means a backwoods princess. She endowed churches in Cyprus, in France, Venetian mer-

chants traded with her kingdom. She watched jealously over the welfare of her subjects and crushed the ambitions of the feudal baronage. She abolished torture and the cruel custom of mutilation.

El Masudi, the Arab traveller in these parts, wrote of the Caucasians:

> They are, among all the nations whom we have mentioned, the cleanest and the most handsome in their appearance, both men and women. They have good persons, are slender round the waist, have well-shaped hips, and are of a comely form. They dress in white, in Greek brocade, in cloth of scarlet colour, and other sorts of cloth or gilt brocade.

If a population of five million people-greater than that of England and Scotland of the time-is any indication of prosperity and civilization, then Tamara's kingdom, the graces of her court, the architectural splendour of her palaces and churches, rivalled the medieval glories of the Europe of her day.

Married against her will at an early age to a Russian, George Bogolyubskoi, Tamara's life was miserable. Her husband was always in his cups. She divorced him two years later and married a distant relative, David Soslan. But Bogolyubskoi, who had been exiled to Byzantium, returned to lead a revolt of the nobles against the queen. Tamara defeated her ex-husband and sent him packing again, only, unfortunately, " to take once more the way of his ill-fortune."

Bogolyubskoi returned seven years later, this time with strong Turkish reinforcements. Tamara again swept him aside, and then, in order to put an end to Turkish attacks, she carried the war into enemy territory and established the boundaries of her kingdom as far as Trebizond.

Rustaveli did not survive long after Tamara's death. Heart-broken and weary, the poet is said to have repaired to Jerusalem, where he died, asking earnestly to be forgiven his many sins.

THE TARTAR BLITZ

Tamara's kingdom passed into the hands of her son, Giorgi IV. Lasha, Light of the World, they called him. He was capable, amusing, witty, and a drunkard into the bargain.

In her last years Tamara's court was distinguished for its probity of manners, and when the eighteen-year-old king at last became master in his mother's house he gave way to festivals and revels. Lasha was the horror of the old-fashioned courtiers and the aged priests. But he was not his mother's son for nothing. He crushed a long succession of revolts of the nobles which arose in the kingdom. Only when rumours began to reach his ears "of the arrival of a strange people speaking a strange tongue who were devastating Armenia" did he stir from the banqueting-board and call on his people to meet the unknown menace with their ancient courage.

The little men, riding under their horses' bellies and shooting clouds of short arrows at their enemies, carried devastation before them into the northern regions of Persia. The Light of the World summoned ninety thousand horsemen. They fought well and bravely, but could not withstand the new tactics of the Mongols, who paid scant regard to the chivalrous knightly methods with which the Georgians made war. Had the king and his nobles summoned the common people to defend their hearths, the history of the Caucasus might have been very different.

But the Mongols were like the wind, blowing where it listeth, and, having defeated the Georgian nobility, they suddenly turned around and moved south.

Giorgi Lasha's reign came to an abrupt end in 1223. He left a small son, a bastard by his latest mistress, a Kakhetine peasant girl. Such an opportunity for intrigue, of course, the Georgian nobles could not let pass, although they had promised to accept the child as their sovereign.

The throne was seized by Rusudani, the sister of Lasha. She had no right to the mantle of Tamara. By character, she was a wild, dissipated woman who carried her politics into the bedchamber. While she left God to look after the Mongols, Tiflis was attacked and pillaged by a minor Persian potentate, because she had taken no precautions against a Fifth Column that she had let flourish in her capital city.

In 1236 the Mongols returned. Tiflis was 'scorched' with surprising efficiency by its governor, and Rusudani, the queen, fled to the hills.

But let this much be said for the Mongols: merciless as they were in battle, they were generous in peace. They had picked up not a little of the manners and refinement of the Chinese whom they had conquered. The fidelity with which they kept their word was a source of great astonishment to Christian oath-breakers. Those faithful journalists, the Georgian annalists, said of them:

> There is truly reason to be astonished; to see them you would have thought they were destitute of sense. But their wisdom and ability was without bounds. They talked little, and they never said that which was not true. Incapable of partiality under any circumstances, above all, in anything which concerned

the decisions of justice. And they have the excellent laws established by Ghengis Khan.

The yoke of the invader is never pleasant, even though it be mild. Nevertheless, the Mongol Khan was often a better friend of the poor folk than the arrogant Georgian nobles. The Mongol dominions stretched from the Yellow Sea to the Persian Gulf. The fact that they had not yet been Mohammedanized made them tolerant of all religions, and when Queen Rusudani made her peace with them they left her a nominal independence, taking her son David as a hostage to the Mongol camp at Saray on the Volga.

For the next hundred years the fate of Georgia was decided in the great camps of Batu and Saray. Dynastic quarrels among the Tartars, especially between the sons of Ghengis Khan, weakened their hold over the Caucasus and the House of Bagrationi slowly regained its ascendancy.

Then, with appalling suddenness, Georgia was visited with the Black Death. In 1366 the population of the Caucasus was decimated, and to add to its trials, had to face the last and most terrible invasion of the Tartars under Timur, the Lame.

This time the Mongols must have left their Chinese manners at home. Newly converted to Islam, they showed a young and terrible fervour against the Christian Georgians and Armenians. Bagrat V was compelled to embrace the Moslem faith. This did not prevent him from helping his son Giorgi to ambush a Tartar army at a propitious moment and massacring them. Timur returned from his Indian conquests and began to leave heaps of skulls as milestones to Tiflis.

Giorgi tried to delay the conqueror with rich gifts. He sent gold pieces with the name of the Great Khan stamped upon them. He dispatched an enormous ruby and a thousand horses, and Timur's anger was miraculously appeased. The Tartar knew that he had destroyed the effective military power of his enemy and retired to direct an invasion of China, a campaign that was nullified by his death.

This last Mongol invasion also marked the end of a united Georgian kingdom. To-day the descendants of the great Khan, the Nogai Tartars, live peacefully in the Caucasus. The skulls of their enemies, which they made into drinking-cups, are but a memory; but it is only in the last twenty years that they have developed a written language of their own.

AND NOW THE MAN WITH THE HOE

The name of kings and their deeds serve only as convenient milestones through centuries of development. But the man with the hoe, the shepherd, even the bandit, all the dwellers in the Caucasian crags and crannies, these are the stuff of history; the men who shed their blood in local feuds between petty lordlings or threw themselves bravely against invaders, many times their size and strength.

Even the Georgians with all their martial spirit—and we take the Georgians, because the detailed history of the Armenian kingdom and the people of Azerbaijan would fill this book to thrice its capacity—even they, swashbucklers, lovers of good wine, living in a warm, mellow country, had the dull occupation of making their living.

While kings fought and barons hacked each other to

pieces the villeins and yeomen of England did their best to ignore the Wars of the Roses. So, no doubt, did the Caucasian breeder of pigs or keeper of mountain sheep try to go about his daily business with as little interruption as possible. He submitted to the conqueror of the moment with ironic patience, waiting for another conqueror to come and wipe his tyrant out.

It was a general misfortune, however, that, unlike England, where the feudal system was deposed by a strong monarchy and the growth of the merchant classes, Georgia remained a state of princes and serfs with a merchant class that was mainly Armenian. Consequently, the ill-feeling which later developed between the Armenian and Georgian middle classes was initially stimulated by economic reasons.

Justice for the man with the hoe existed only under beneficent rulers like David II and Tamara the Great, who "had a horror of blood, of blinding, and mutilation." The mountain folk had a rough justice of their own—the blood feud. With this we will deal later.

The man with the hoe was a chattel, a serf. With the coming of the Turks he often became a slave. A real difference exists between serf and slave. As a serf, he was bartered together with the land on which he worked; as a slave, he was taken to distant markets and sold into the households of the sultans and viziers.

The land of the Georgian was rich. Whom God so often abandoned, for him Nature became a generous provider. The means of satisfying life were not hard to come by, although the silks which Marco Polo found in Georgia (produced in great abundance) were, of course, not destined for his back. The country balanced between

prosperity and abject misery. The cultivation of silk-worms was practised in many homes. Copper lay in the soil, and iron. Vineyards and delicate fruits like apricots, peaches, mulberries, apples, pears, flourished. The oil of the city that the traveller Barbaro called "Bachu," although "it smelt horryblye," the Caucasians "nevertheless used for furnishing their lights and for the anointing of their camels twice a year. For if they were not anointed they would become scabby." The ***kinjals***, the daggers, a part of the ceremonial wear of many Caucasian races to-day, were wrought by masterly hands, as well as coats-of-mail, swords, and armour of every kind. The dyes of the Caucasus, madder and saffron, much sought in carpet-making, were famous throughout the East.

TURKISH STORM-TROOPS

Hitler was not the first to use storm-troops. The Caesars had their Praetorian guards, Ivan the Terrible of Russia had his ***streltzi***, and the Turks created the corps of Janissaries. They were recruited principally from the people of the Balkans and the Caucasus.

As the Turks gathered in strength in the sixteenth century and swept up the remnants of the Byzantine Empire to the foot of their Sultan's Divan, so they began to penetrate step by step into the Caucasus. The Persians played a similar game.

The Georgians resisted, skirmished, and bribed. But there was disunity in their ranks. Here a whole tribe would mutiny because its standards of honour had been outraged; it had been refused to lead the van. The same sort of thing happened in another mountainous country,

Scotland, when Bonnie Prince Charlie found a similar difficulty with his clans.

The worst enemy of the Georgians was frequently the cupidity of their own princes. Why, in the seventeenth century things had come to such a pass that Tamuraz, King of Kakhetia (a district of Georgia), was accusing his henchman of selling as many as fifteen thousand Christian boys to the Turks annually. A Huguenot jeweller, Sir John Chardin, who happened to be travelling in these parts, exclaimed:

> Mingrelia [Western Georgia] is at present very much displeased, there not being in it above 20,000 inhabitants though it is not above thirty years ago there was no less than four score thousand, the cause of which decrease proceeds from their war with their neighbour and the vast number of people of both sexes which the Nobility has sold of late years. For a long time there has been drained out of Mingrelia every year, either by Purchase or Barter, above 12,000 persons ; all of which are sold to the Mohammedans, Persians, and Turks, there being none but they that deal in that kind of traffic in those parts. They carry 3000 every year directly to Constantinople which they have in exchange for clothes, arms, and other things which they carry, as I have said, into Mingrelia.

Chardin even goes so far as to suggest that he " had been shown several gentlemen who had been so prodigiously unnatural as to sell their own children, wives, and mothers."

There is also an account of an enterprising prince who ran a human stud-farm—a most up-to-date establishments, so he thought. He forced his subjects, men and women, into marriage. He fed them and dressed them and was otherwise quite kind to them. He only asked that they should hand him over the children. These he sold at a handsome profit to the Turks.

On one occasion a sad mistake was committed, perhaps not by this same prince, who knew his business well. Some one had sent a tribute of a hundred beautiful maidens to the Shah of Persia. The Shah returned them. He was mortally offended. "I don't want girls," he said. "I want boys."

Was it surprising, therefore, that at one time there were more Caucasians living outside the Caucasus than in their native country? To quote Chardin again, he says, speaking of the Persians:

> In other parts of the kingdom the Persian blood is grown clearer by the mixture of the Georgian and Circassian Blood, which is certainly the People of the World, which Nature favours most, both on account of the Shape and Complexion, and of the Boldness and Courage; they are likewise Sprightly, Courtly, and Amorous. There is scarce a gentleman in Persia whose Mother is not a Georgian or a Circassian Woman; to begin with the King who commonly is a Georgian or Circassian by the Mother's side, and whereas the Mixture began about a hundred years ago, the Female kind is grown fairer as well as the other, and the Persian Women are now very handsome and very well shap'd, tho' they are still inferior to the Georgians.

The Turks, however, had other ideas besides replenishing their harems. The "sprightly, courtly, and amorous Georgians" and other hillmen made excellent soldiers. They were taken from their parents at an early age—between six and ten; they were put to school, converted to Islam. They lived in comfortable barracks, were kept away from all feminine influence and feminine wiles, denied their native wine, and made into tough, daring soldiers by a rigorous way of life. The food was excellent, and they were even paid in cash. Their uniform was brilliant, white caps stood on their heads, sharp

swords were strapped to their sides. They were the terror of Europe, the men who won an Empire for the Turks. Many of these Caucasians even ruled provinces for their Turkish masters.

This was not such a cruel fate as it may at first appear. In fact, many Turks grew envious of their exclusive position and clamoured to join the corps of Janissaries. Life as a Janissary was in many ways better than being an obscure serf. And as for the girls, they became mothers of kings, as Chardin informs us. In any case, Chardin's horror is a little misplaced considering that the Spaniards, the French, and the English were busily robbing the jungles of Africa of their inhabitants at about the same time.

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Chapter III

THE TSARS HELP—THEMSELVES

You ask a man to help you to put out a fire. Well and good. But what if, after he has saved your house, he decides that it belongs to him? That is precisely what happened to the Georgians and Armenians. They appealed to the big Christian brother over the border to save them from the Persians and the Turks. To this day the favourite mud pie of anti-Georgian Caucasian politicians has been, "The Georgians let in the Russians."

True, but inevitable. After the Russians had broken away from Tartar dominion, bands of men who came to be called Cossacks fled from the restrictive rule of the Tsars to the fertile lands of the south. Not only did they establish their fortresses amid the cataracts of the Dnieper in the Ukraine and on the quiet Don; they went farther south to the merry, swirling Terek and the broad, honey-coloured river, the Kuban. In time and somewhat unwillingly the Tsars recognized these tough freebooters as guardians of their kingdom's edge.

In answer to the Georgians' cry for help the Tsars lent their Cossack bands. At the same time their hearts quickened with fantastic dreams. If Byzantium was no more Moscow was a reality. Why not make a 'Third Rome' of their capital city? Why not take over the lands that were once the heritage of Byzantium?

At first they were content with tribute for the aid they gave to the Georgians and Armenians. Their de-

mands expanded with their dreams. They seized extravagant titles, derived from lands which were theirs by right neither of inheritance nor of conquest. But, despite their help, the mountains ran red with blood when Shah Abbas, the capable Persian, laid waste the kingdom of Kahetia. He also pulled down many churches and made slaves and concubines of the people.

Russian interference in the Caucasus on any large scale began only in the time of Peter the Great. He, who had conquered the great military power of Sweden, found his fortunes fluctuating in the Caucasus.

The treaty of 1742 concluded between the Tsar, Turkey, and Persia gave Russia the Gate of Gates, Baku, and the territory of Daghestan. Forts sprang up to guard the passes, and Cossacks were imported to garrison them. And so a turbulent 'Ireland' was born. To Persian and Turkish intrigues were added those of the Russians. In the meantime territories rapidly changed hands.

Only one king, Irakli II, who ruled some forty years after Peter the Great's death, had any prospect of uniting the Caucasus under him. A brilliant soldier was this Irakli. His fame spread even to the West. It is said that Frederick the Great found it in no way derogatory to remark, "Moi en Europe, et en Asie l'invincible Hercule." But this Georgian Hercules fought a losing battle. It was the old trouble again. He found he could not stamp his authority on the intriguing nobles. Poor man, he castigated them thus: "With all my care and pains, I cannot make anything of them, nor find a single soul who has sense enough to incline his mind or bend his thought towards meaning well. In a word . . . they were born twenty-four hours before the devil."

He appealed to the tribesmen—the Ossetians—magnificent fighters—the Pshavs, Khevsurs, the Armenians, and Tartars—to unite. He almost succeeded in welding them together. But once again he fell under the sway of Russia. To seek the aid of Catherine the Great he was willing to proclaim himself her vassal.

But Georgia was only part of a vast Oriental project of Catherine. She seized the opportunity to set up the town of Vladikavkaz—an insolent name, this 'Ruler of the Caucasus'—which stood on guard before the Daryal Pass. After Irakli's death in 1798 the Caucasus again became a picnicking place for the Turks, the Persians, and the Russians. In despair George XII allied himself even more closely to the Russian Empire. Catherine was clever in her comfort, and she swore that Georgia should remain free, adding hypocritically, "It is not that we may extend our Empire, which is in any case the greatest on earth, that we undertake to protect the kingdom of Georgia." To add insult to injury, this declaration was cast in bronze and set up as a monument in Tiflis.

ONE THING TO GRAB, ANOTHER TO SWALLOW

The last and most important phase of Georgian history—in fact, the history of the Caucasus itself—was the so-called pacification of the country by the Tsars.

Catherine and her successors behaved with considerable acumen at times. When Georgia passed into their protection hordes of Georgian nobles were invited to St. Petersburg. Here they were feasted, and their names grew heavy with titles with which they were childishly pleased. In exchange they Russianized their names.

Many of them lopped off the Georgian '-vili' and took instead the Russian '-ov'.

Thus, for example, the grandson of a great Georgian noble by the name of Tzitzishvili appeared in the Caucasus in 1808 as Prince Tzitzianov. He was given the unpleasant task of governing the new provinces. Justice must be done to him. He was a capable man despite the operation on his name. Tzitzianov had an ukase from the Emperor Paul in his pocket to create order out of chaos. He did not underestimate the difficulties before him, as he knew the unstable character of his countrymen and their tendency to meet domination by mockery. But neither was Tzitzianov very polite. To one petty prince he wrote, "Yours is the soul of a dog and the understanding of an ass." Clearly Tzitzianov was a formidable fellow.

But there were many Georgians who refused to submit to the Russians. Tzitzianov's answer was to build in 1804 the Georgian Military Road which connected the North Caucasus with Transcaucasia. By this means he severed the north from the south and was able 'to restore order' in one part before attempting the other. Tzitzianov perished, however, before the gates of Baku.

The so-called Cossack line was pushed farther into the hills. General Yermolov succeeded to Tzitzianov's post. He began by attempting to subdue the turbulent Chechens, a race which considered itself composed exclusively of princes. Yermolov first tried persuasion. He tried to impress these people with his power and grandeur. But the Chechens remained seated when he addressed them. He was not the greatest man on the

earth as far as they were concerned. "Tell us, who stands between you and God ?" they asked him.

" Nobody but the Tsar," the proud general would answer.

" Well, in that case," said the Chechens, " why should we honour you ? Between us and God there is no one. You should honour us ! "

He tried hard to adapt his rule to the customs of the mountaineers. He had been told that the Chechens never obeyed a command. Everything had to be put to them in the form of a request. Even when he sent them to prison his style of address was, "The Governor requests Prince So-and-so to spend ten years in prison for robbing the Tsar's soldiers." But Yermolov's patience was soon exhausted. Persuasion having failed, he drew the sword. The Caucasians answered him with the sword. For the next fifty years the country proved a running sore, and cost the Russians many lives and much ammunition.

"My sword," said Yermolov, " must be law for the natives as inevitable as death. Kindness in natives' eyes is but a sign of weakness. Therefore I act with all possible severity. Every native hanged saves a hundred Russians from death." Such words have been uttered by the present-day barbarians in Paris, Warsaw, and Belgrade.

The Mohammedan population of the Caucasus answered eagerly to the Jihad, the holy war instigated largely by the Turks. Russian garrisons were murdered wholesale. The nickname of General Yermolov became "Moscow Chief Devil." Perhaps what the Caucasians liked least were his attempts at psychological warfare.

"The Caucasus," he said,

> is like a tremendous fortress. It is a kind of wonder. It is, as it were, surrounded by works of defence. It is defended by a strong garrison. Only a lunatic would attempt taking it by a frontal attack. A wise captain should have recourse to military art. He should dig trenches and try to seize the fortress through underground passages and mines.

These words should recommend themselves to Hitler and his captains if they should think the seizing of the Caucasus an idyll of spring.

Yermolov was as ruthless as he was energetic. Despite his force of sixty thousand soldiers, he tried to undermine the Caucasian morale by bribing traitors and rewarding deserters. But these tricks were only partially successful. The auls—villages of the mountaineers—were set on fire. Women and children were murdered. But the soul of the mountaineers was harder than Yermolov's metal. New avengers sprang up, and a deep and dreadful hatred which refused to be drowned in blood. Instead of breaking the Caucasus, the Caucasus broke him. Yermolov returned to Russia, a defeated and bewildered man.

But the Tsar's ordeals were not over. A new leader came out of the hills: an Iman, a Mohammedan priest, holding the Koran in his left hand and a pistol in the other. His name was Shamyl, the last knight of the Caucasus.

A SHIRT OF BLOOD

Not only in the turbulent Montenegro of the last century did a woman show her son his father's bloodstained shirt to urge him to fight to the death against an oppressor.

Like Noah's petrified Ark and the aged Prometheus, the story of Shamyl has passed into the mythology of the Caucasus, a sort of extravagant ***Arabian Nights***, which every Caucasian drinks in almost at the same time as his mother's milk. To carve a rough cameo out of this man's crowded life is to do him an injustice. But the surest guide to a man's personality has perhaps always existed in the anecdote and the parable.

Handsome of feature, tall, blue-eyed, he was a natural leader of men. His athletic performance of being able to jump over a trench twenty-seven feet wide, his agility on horseback, his fantastic escapes—all these are small deeds compared to the amazing resistance he waged against a mighty empire for more than twenty-five years.

As a priest of Allah, his mandate ran strong in the hills of Daghestan. With him were the implacable Chechens, the Cherkess people, and the Abkhasins. But he made one mistake. He was violently anti-Christian. Perhaps he had seen enough of the Tsar's brand of Christianity, mirrored so faithfully in gutted villages. But Shamyl acted unwisely when he made no pacts with the Christian Ossets, Khevsurs, and other Georgian mountain tribes who had been absorbed by the Russians. They would have proved valuable allies.

The best generals were sent against him, but Shamyl defeated them in turn. Even when he was surrounded he made Houdini-like escapes, always backing farther and farther into the inaccessible mountains. On one occasion Shamyl was trapped in a fort. Breaches had been made. The only escape was a frontal attack. Using his athletic prowess to good purpose, he jumped over the heads of

the enemy and, although severely wounded, disappeared into the hills.

Nor was the quality of his men less intrepid. In one engagement a whole army was held up by a small fort which dominated an important mountain pass. The Russians deployed artillery against it. They brought up sappers. At last they prevailed on the garrison to surrender. It contained but two men. For more than two weeks these solitary mountaineers had baulked a vast army.

Time and time again the Russians proclaimed that Shamyl was dead, They advanced their Cossack line farther and farther into the mountains. Brutality and massacre was their answer to the frantic bravery of the Chechens. Whole villages immolated themselves on their enemy's sabres rather than surrender.

One day the Chechens sent messengers to Shamyl to beg him to sign an armistice. Shamyl's reply was to lock himself up in a mosque with his priests. None dared to disturb him. At the end of three days his answer was, "You made an oath to fight to the end. Abide by it!" The messengers feared to return empty-handed, although they feared Shamyl's anger even more. When he saw them hesitate he warned them, "He who asks for surrender, he shall be beaten with a hundred strokes." But the plight of the garrison, the messengers knew, was hopeless. They prevailed on Shamyl's mother to intercede on their behalf. When the old woman had put forward her plea Shamyl answered her, "Accursed be he that maketh his mother to grieve, for surely hell shall await him. But the oath I gave of the Koran shall be obeyed. You were the first to speak of surrender, my mother,

Therefore it is ordained that you shall suffer the hundred strokes."

Remorseless executioners seized the old woman. No one moved. After the first stroke had been administered Shamyl stepped forward and said, "The law of Allah is unalterable. But it is said in the Koran that the children may take the punishment on themselves. On my back shall fall the rest of the sentence. I order you to whip me with ninety-nine strokes." And there, in front of the mosque, Shamyl's followers beat him into insensibility. It was a lesson the Chechens never forgot. They returned to fight and to die.

In 1854 the Crimean War broke out, and Shamyl obtained the support of the Turks. But the help they gave was not great enough to tip the scales of fortune. The contrary happened. The mountain people in their naivete grew to respect the Russians far more for standing up to what they regarded as the mightiest country in the world, Turkey—let alone the British, the French, and Sardinians.

At last Shamyl was trapped in his eyrie. His army had dwindled to a mere four hundred men. He was faced with a large Russian army. He and his men fought until barely a dozen were alive. But the Russian general had orders to spare Shamyl's life. "The Wonder of the Caucasus, the Unconquerable Lion, is wanted alive by the Russians." So they sent a crafty Armenian officer who had taken service with the Tsar. Shamyl refused to listen to him, but at last yielded when the emissary pointed to his wives and children

For their sake alone Shamyl agreed to surrender. As he rode forward to the Russian camp he was greeted with fierce cheers. Had the Armenian not been quick enough to interpret these shouts as an acclamation Shamyl would have drawn his dagger and killed himself. Such dishonour a Caucasian would never allow.

Shamyl was taken into the interior of Russia. He went, not as a captive, but as an honoured guest. Even the Tsar himself met him at Kharkov and embraced his implacable enemy. Shamyl in his simplicity was deeply touched by the reception. He had not been particularly merciful to his Russian prisoners and was moved by the generous forgiveness.

But a few days later, when a great ball was given in his honour, he and his retainers ran like madmen from the palace when they glimpsed the naked shoulders of the ladies of the Russian court. He was still the priest of Islam, and a woman's beauty, he considered, should be most properly veiled.

The Russians pensioned the warrior handsomely. He died an old man of seventy-four in 1871. They granted his request to travel to Mecca. And it was at Medina he died, before the tomb of the Prophet, mumbling no doubt his misgivings for having made peace with the infidels.

With his passing, all hopes of Caucasian freedom seemed to disappear. The Caucasus belonged to the Tsars. But not for long. History was to catch up with the mountain people. It was to hammer them into unity. They were to discover that being together was no yoke.

BIRDS OF PARADOX

The Arabs called the Caucasus Jebel Assuni—the "Mountain of Languages." The Lord Jehovah, we are told, punished the ambitious builders of the Tower of Babel with a confusion of tongues. But here were mountains of the Maker's own creation higher than those ever built by the hands of men. Here was a Babel of His making—a myriad of languages lost in the hills so that one valley people might very well be unable to converse with its neighbour.

The following list of tongues and tribes is by no means exhaustive. But it certainly fits into the turbulent background we have just described. There dwell in the Caucasus, then, Abkhasians, Armenians, Chechens, Cherkes, Georgians, Germans, Greeks, Imeretians, Jews, Kabards, Karachais, Khevsurs, Kumyks, Kurds, Lesghians, Mingrelians, Nogai, Ossetes, Persians, Poles, Russians, Tartars, Tates.

Some of these peoples and their languages are closely related. All of them are a fascinating playground for philologists. To follow up their experiments and deductions is as exciting as—stamp-collecting, say. Every year new important discoveries have been made about the inhabitants of the Caucasus. Some of them read like fairy-tales. For example, a few years ago an old man was found who knew by heart ten thousand lines of a long narrative poem that had been written in some forgotten age.

The members of one of these tribes, or clans, can often be counted in bare hundreds. The Georgians, on the other hand, number at the present time 3,600,000 peo-

ple. Second in size are the Azerbaijan Tartars with 3,300,000, and the third place belongs to the Armenians with 1,300,000. But not all these people live in the districts labelled Armenia, Georgia, or Azerbaijan. In Armenia, for example, only 85 per cent. of the population is Armenian. The total population of the Caucasus at the present time is about eight millions. This figure excludes the various North Caucasian republics which are not incorporated in the three Soviet republics of Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan.

Of all the paradoxical languages, Georgian surely takes first place. My impression of it is that it is not unbeautiful, although it is not so musical as Russian, perhaps, because it does not contain such a rich variety of vowels. It has been mentioned before that present-day Georgian does not differ greatly from the language of the twelfth century.

Scientists say that Georgian is an agglutinous language. At some early period in the history of speech Georgian became fossilized in the agglutinous stage—many sounds, that is, are made in the throat. Languages like English, French, Italian, Russian, and German belong to the Indo-Aryan group. Georgian, on the other hand, is a language quite on its own, belonging to the Japhetic group.

Take another agglutinous language, the Chechen. It has as many as fifty-seven consonants. This is an enormous figure when compared to the twenty consonants used in English.

The Azerbaijan Tartars, just mentioned, speak a kind of Turkish. The Armenians, on the other hand, possess

a very mixed language, half-way between Indo-Aryan and Japhetic. Their script is unique, though there is a trace of Greek influence.

The word *mama* in Georgian contrary to all expectations, means 'father,' and *deda* is 'mother.' Philologists explain that once upon a time Georgia was ruled by women who took the stronger sounding word for themselves and compelled the fathers of Georgia to call themselves *mama*. These matriarchal civilizations are very ancient, and testify to the great gaps in Georgian and world history which must yet be filled by the archaeologists.

An anecdote is told about the Circassians. They were so proud, it is said, that they refused to speak their language. They were proud, it appears, because they claimed it was unpronounceable. For centuries they used the language of a neighbouring tribe. " Our tongue is too beautiful, too refined, to be held together by signs." By this means they explained away the absence of an alphabet. To-day, in common with other formerly alphabet-less people, they have a flourishing written language.

Admiration and astonishment has followed in the wake of Soviet victories. But another story remains to be told, of another victory which has steadily moved to its climax in the last twenty years : the welding together of 189 different races which inhabit the U.S.S.R., not a few of which, as we have seen, live in the Caucasus itself.

Great differences of temperament exist, for example, between the Georgians and Armenians. These differences have played an important part in history, a very important part in recent history. The Georgians, I think, have many of the virtues and failings of the Irish. This

is a rough appraisal, of course, but they are headstrong, imaginative, and hospitable. It may be their climate that has kept them so jocular. It may be their beautiful women who have given them their reputation as lovers. It has certainly been the wine that has helped to make them such good company. It is precisely these qualities that served them best in the tragic moments of their history. Their survival as a race is not a little due to their sense of humour, to their ability to make the best of things, to laugh when they should have broken their hearts.

The Armenians, on the other hand, survived for very different reasons. They have what one might call the practical virtues. As a Christian people they were hated by their Mohammedan neighbours. Their ears, as we know, were periodically shaved off by men who almost made it a national sport. Oppression made them tough, taught them to developnimble wits. The proverb that "An Armenian is worth ten Jews in business" is current in the Middle East.

Communities of them are to be found in every part of the globe. There are even large settlements of Armenians in India. But they love their native land with a fervent love, and when the Soviet Republic of Armenia was formed many of them, poor and rich, were happy to return and to take up the onerous work of pioneers.

The name of the Daryal Pass is derived from the Persian Dar-i-alan, the Gate of the Alans. The inhabitants of the territory at the intersection of the pass and the Georgian highway are the Ossetians. They are an ancient people which had, in all probability, inhabited large parts of southern Russia before the various nomad races

from Asia forced them back into the hills. It is they who probably named the Don and the Dniester—derived from Don-stir—" a noisy river" ; also the Dnieper—Don-pire, " overwhelming river."

Although their language is very mixed, the predominant elements are Aryan — that is, are words which resemble English and German. One word comes to mind in particular : 'cow' in Ossetian is pronounced 'kuh,' quite identical with the German word. They call themselves the Iron People, derived, perhaps, from Alan or Aryan. Many of them have fair or light brown hair ; they are blue-eyed and sometimes quite tall. I wonder whether Professor Haushofer, Hitler's court wizard who decides who are Germans and who are not, has marked down the Ossetians for 'liberation.'

On the other hand, there are some Germans in the Caucasus. But they number only about ten thousand. Most of them are descended from religious exiles of the seventeenth century. One story I have heard suggests that a number of Wuerttemberg families were persuaded by an old peasant woman to make a journey to Jerusalem. But when they came to the Caucasus they decided to go no farther. They probably considered they were near enough to God as it was. Their small village of Luxembourg is built with gables in the fashion of old German houses. By occupation they are principally collective farmers and grow excellent grapes. They have a farm of their own which has shown good profits for many years.

RELIGIONS

The influence of the Armenian-Gregorian Church stretches far beyond the borders of Armenia to the United

States, to Rumania, Bulgaria, Greece, Syria, Egypt, and India. There is even a small, toy-like edifice standing behind a quiet turning in Kensington. It continues to puzzle many an Englishman by its quaint, drum-shaped tower with its pointed lid, surmounted with a cross.

Recently Archbishop Kilandyan, head of the Armenian Church in the Soviet Union, went to Beirut to take part in the elections of the Armenian Church He said :

> " The fact that I am here and wearing a crucifix on my breast is the best refutation of Fascist lies about religious persecution in the U.S.S.R. All the peoples of the Soviet Union are united against Fascism. Our Armenian pilots, parachutists, tank-men, and soldiers are fighting and winning distinction at the front. The Germans will never succeed in obtaining even a glimpse of the Caucasus. Armenian men of science and arts continue their activities in their various fields of endeavours, and our artificial rubber factory supplies the Red Army's motorized forces."

But the Khevsurs and Svans are surely the strangest Christians in the world. They live in the region of Svanetia among glaciers and mountains towering up to seventeen thousand feet. They were baptized into Christianity many centuries ago. But, persistent pagans that they were, they cheerfully converted their Moon God, Armazi, into St. George and prayed not to God, not to Jesus Christ, but to their own beloved saint, saying "Oh, God, thou holy George." An odd form of Christianity, this.

They used to be very catholic in their choice of a Sabbath. In honour of their Georgian neighbours who were Christian, they celebrated Sunday. Saturday they celebrated in honour of some mountain Jews who lived near by and Friday they kept free in honour of Moham-

med; and, just to show their independence, they also celebrated on Monday.

But in addition to their religious observances and superstitions they chose their diet very carefully and refused to eat fish, because they maintained that they would, in fact, be eating some important god or other. Like other primitive communities, the Khevsurs had a great respect for trees. Perhaps that is why their country, as, indeed, the rest of the Caucasus, is so well wooded.

Roads have skirted their settlements now, and schools have been opened. Perhaps they have even read about themselves in Frazer's *Golden Bough*.

I have heard strange stories told of the Ingushes. They are a people who live south of the Georgian highway. In some mysterious way they are supposed to be connected with the old Crusaders who, after their defeat, strayed "full of lice and lechery and the spoils of Palestine" into the Caucasus. They had refused to return to their chastity-belted wives of East Anglia and Provence—preferring, it seems, the Circassian girls with their eyes "as purple as the dust on the vines."

The name 'Ingush' has a resemblance sufficiently near to the word 'English' to stimulate the imagination. Like many other Caucasian tribes, the Ingushes enjoyed full equality among themselves, each calling the other 'Prince' until 'Worker' became the title of honour and distinction in the Soviet Union. I am tempted to think that they use the word 'comrade' with just that piquant difference they so illogically called each other princes.

The people of Daghestan and the Tartars of Azerbaijan, as well as those of other communities in the Cauca-

sus, are Mohammedan. There are 1312 mosques serving the Mohammedan community of the U.S.S.R. A proportion of these are in the Caucasus. There are about 8000 Moslem priests, or mullahs, and another 36,000 other Moslem religious dignitaries, such as Ishans and Murids.

Chapter IV

STALIN

Dugashvili, Koba, David, Nijeradze, Tshipikoff—the names could be extended, but they all add up to one—Stalin.

Although we live in a polite age where every man's name is prefaced by Mr or Monsieur, journalists and statesmen were very happy when, on his becoming Chairman of the Council of Peoples' Commissars, they could call him "Premier Stalin." I well remember the sweet confusion of one lady who had, for a number of years, believed that the Soviet Republic of Georgia was in some mysterious way connected with the famous American hymn of liberation, ***Marching through Georgia.***

I remember too the countless biographies of Stalin, written by tourists who have stood outside the Kremlin. And what of the imaginative novelists who wrote books as 'ex-generals of the Red Army' or 'former Secret Service agents'! There was a time when gaudy ikons were quickly peddled of the so-called mystery-man, familiarly known to all who professed inside knowledge as Soso Dugashvili.

MINERAL OR VEGETABLE ?

Torrents of nonsense, hysterics, pots of black and pots of white, have all been emptied upon Stalin. So

it seems the Caucasus would be somewhat like playing *Hamlet* without the Prince of Denmark.

In photography it is essential to develop the negative so that the positive—the real picture—may be seen. Hence, perhaps, we may look upon the literary past with a smile.

One truth emerges, however. Lenin said that when the Russian Revolution broke out it was not necessary to ask the soldiers whether they preferred war or peace. "They simply voted with their feet." To-day's tribute to Stalin's leadership is a united nation which has decisively cast its vote not only with its feet but with its life.

The righteous thunder of those 'who could read Stalin's mind' now sounds like faint cries in the ear of posterity. But the truth—what is the truth about this man's personality ? The reader must form his own opinion. It remains only to be said that Stalin must be judged either by his works or condemned because the window out of which one has looked at the world has not been the one through which he had to look at the world.

It remains true, even if platitudinous, that every personality is a mystery; it does not matter whether a man conducts a bus or a great state. One may judge him by the way he says, "Hey, mind the step !" or Hold tight !" If he says it roughly sometimes, it does not necessarily brand him as a tyrant.

While a part of the world slept in blissful politeness Fascism had reached its adolescence. It was making faces and was shouting with gusty bravado against the Soviet Union. There were the Yamato too, the Japanese,

the self-styled "Seeds of the Sun," who were disturbing the Union's peace with border raids and threats.

Just when the Soviet people had raised themselves out of chaos, and were completing the First Five-year Plan, the maniacal dream of being heroic on a battlefield was forced into German and Italian eyes. The people of the Soviet Union had found a greater heroism in ploughing a field or digging a coal-mine. They never believed in Hitler's perfumed promises of peace. The stink of concentration camps, of charred books of genius, and of oppression was a scent they knew meant danger, not only for themselves but for the whole of the civilized world. They prepared for an attack on their soil.

Although during that preparation they cultivated and improved their domestic economy, they lived in a state of almost aggressive watchfulness and suspicion of the outside world. The cost of what they had built up was too big, and it was too promising, to throw away by slackness and wishful thinking.

When, during the Second Five-year Plan, cosmetics and better clothing were possible and life became easier and better, a hue and cry was raised by some austere prophets, principally the Trotskyists, that "the Soviet Union had gone soft, had taken over bourgeois prejudices." Aided by German propaganda, scorn was poured upon Russian efficiency and the value of her alliance. But this chapter would be tiresome if it listed all the grievances. German gunpowder and treachery have blown away a tissue of cobwebs and lies.

It was not such a sardonic fate, perhaps, that chose a man of a once oppressed and despised race to lead one-

sixth of the world against a tyrant as terrible as ever the Tsars were, a hater of all small peoples, complex-ridden, devoted to death.

STALIN'S ROLE IN THE CAUCASUS

Imagine the sensation if in pre-war-years some enterprising publisher had brought out a book entitled *I knew Stalin's Mother* or *Soso was a Good Boy: the Life of the Man of Steel.* What delectable nonsense one could write in the grand style of a success story or dreadful warning: "Little did we know that in the year 1879 in the small slum-town of Gori, in Georgia, the man that would . . ." In these stern times the reader does not want to hear what public men eat and drink and wear at night. We have been served with so many pages of gush. Facts are the meat of our time.

Stalin was born on December 21, 1879, in Gori, a small town some thirty-five miles outside Tiflis. It had known wars and disasters; it had seen conquerors come and go. Clinging to a mountain-side, it had been a place of refuge for the high and lowly.

He was born of poor parents. His father was a workman in a leather factory in Tiflis. 'Cobbler' sounds more romantic, but the fact is he worked twelve to fourteen hours a day at a bench like thousands of other workmen, although in intermittent periods he plied his trade at home. To supplement the family income Ekatirina, Stalin's mother, went out to work as a washerwoman. Life was hard for the parents and the child.

His mother had sufficient vision to send the young

Stalin to an ecclesiastical school. Her motive may not have been, as is so often alleged, to turn her son into a priest, but to give him a good education. In those days the only purveyors of higher education for the poor were religious establishments.

Napoleon had dreams of liberating Corsica. In his early days he gave no thought to the kingdom of France. Stalin may have speculated in a similar fashion to free Georgia. But he knew that in the ramshackle Empire of the Tsars it was not only the Georgians who were persecuted, not only the Caucasian peoples, not only the Asiatic minorities—it was the Russians themselves.

In order that we may look through his window-pane for a moment and not through our own, let us see what the state of the Caucasus in particular, and of Russia in general, was like at the time.

PRELUDE TO REVOLUTION

Negro slavery was abolished throughout British dominions in the early thirties of the last century. But in the Empire of the Tsars degrading serfdom was the common lot of millions of peasants until the year 1861. The Act of Emancipation could hardly have been withheld from the ' pacified ' Caucasus, since the Russian mission was one of " pure civilization. "

The abolition of serfdom naturally meant the disappearance of the feudal system in Georgia and the Caucasus. But the feudal nobility, which had openly sided with the Tsarist regime in defeating Shamyl and other fighters for Caucasian liberty, now became more Russian than the Russians. They hoped for economic

advantages. Instead, many of them were impoverished by the restriction of their right on the labour of their people. The majority, however, were rewarded with government posts or went into the army. Crowds of them could be seen in the fashionable ***Kurorts***—' spas '—making eyes at rich provincial ladies whom they sought to captivate by their ' wild ' manners, their fantastic tales, and handsome uniforms.

Of course, this did not mean that the worst excesses of ' landlordism ' had disappeared from the Caucasus. Quite the contrary. The Tsar's own viceroy, Vorontsov-Dashkov, informed his master that the continual revolts and disturbances in Georgia were due to the fact that :

> The abolition of feudal rights in Transcaucasia and especially in Georgia . . . has benefited the landlords by increasing the land duties in comparison with the rate prevailing in feudal times. . . . Items liable to quit-rent are sought out on all sorts of pretexts, true and false. If timber grows on part of the peasants' land it is immediately turned into state property liable to quit-rent ; if another part of their land is covered with water owing to a river changing its bed it is at once declared liable to quit-rent for fishing rights. . . . Things have gone so far that the very nut-trees grown by the villagers themselves on their own farm land are declared state property liable to quit-rent. The peasants, while occupying a total area of land twice as great as that of private owners, have been paying twenty times as much as the private owners in money dues alone.

This, then, was the lot of the Caucasian peasantry—that is to say, the majority of the people.

On the other hand, the disappearance of feudalism and the freeing of labour attracted Russian and foreign

capital. In 1871 the first well-shaft was sunk in Baku. Subsequent expansion of these prolific fields was provided by the Swedish Nobel brothers and the French branch of the Rothschilds. Technique and drilling was, of course, primitive in most fields; something like 120 million gallons of oil were wasted in 1873, because no adequate preparation had been made to conserve it.

The profits from the naphtha fields were in some measure shared by a section of the Armenian and Azerbaijan middle classes. This point is made because it throws an interesting light on the subsequent quarrels and disagreements which rent the Caucasus during the rule of the Mensheviks and other national parties in the Caucasus. The Georgian middle classes, in particular, were animated with anti-Armenian feelings. They were anti-Armenian in the same way as some Germans are anti-Semitic. They were jealous of the place the Armenians had won for themselves by "industry, initiative, and good luck", the three requisites of good business.

True to type, Russian Imperialism sought to aggravate the hostility and hatred between the different Caucasian races. The Governor Vorontsov-Dashkov wrote triumphantly to his master:

> I must point out that if there are no Separatist tendencies on the part of the various nationalities, neither are there any Separatist tendencies on an all-Caucasian scale, because all the nationalities of the Caucasus are at loggerheads with one another and submit to co-habitation only under the influence of the Russian Government, without which they would plunge into bloody rivalry at once.

Such government even the astute Machiavelli might eschew.

In order to dilute and make ineffective any concerted opposition, the Russian Government did everything it could to encourage the immigration of Russian colonists into the Caucasus. There was, of course, some excuse for this. After Shamyl's defeat many thousands of Abkhasins and Circassians fled from the Caucasus into Turkey, Persia, and Syria. To replace their labour, something like 300,000 Russian seasonal workers came every year from Central Russia into the Northern Caucasus during harvesting time. Germans, Greeks, and even Italians were invited to provide a labour nucleus in the Caucasus, one which obviously could not organize itself because of its racial variety. Nearly 60 per cent. of the money which was marked down for rural administration went instead to the upkeep of an enormous police force. For education only 4 per cent. was provided.

The opposition to Russification and Tsarist police methods came first from various Liberal elements. The Messameh Dassy group, a Social Democratic organization, the majority of which followed Noah Jordania, was formed in 1893. L. Beria, the present Soviet Commissar for Internal Affairs, writing about them in his exhaustive *History of Bolshevik Organization in Transcaucasia*, says, "From the very beginning Jordania's group adapted a nationalist position on the national question."

It is precisely against this exclusiveness, this petty 'valley nationalism', that Stalin and his associates took their stand. After his expulsion from the seminary Stalin joined the Russian Social Democratic Workers' Party. It was clear to him that to fight Tsarism in the name of Georgian nationalism was no solution to the problem. To leave the economic system unchanged or subject it to

evolutionary processes, as Jordania and his friends proposed, would merely remove one octopus bureaucracy and substitute another, together with its landlords and financial oligarchs.

The solution was to strike at the root of the problem, not to dance round it, waving a national flag, and doing no more than to advocate "the peaceful legal propagation of Marxist ideas" and a narrow propagandist work in circles among the workers.

Moreover, the Mensheviks, as their national mania increased, began to flirt with the Social Federalists, a group that demanded the complete secession of Georgia from Russia and the installation of a Georgian king.

It is difficult to look at politics without bias. But the reader has the advantage of looking upon history, thirty years removed. It must be obvious to him that whatever the rights and wrongs of Communism, Stalin and the Caucasian Bolsheviks appraised the situation in a realistic fashion.

They knew that a small free Georgia, divorced from the Russia of their sympathizers and friends, would, in fact, be nothing but a hot-bed for intrigue. Such had been Georgia's fate for centuries, and such was Georgia's fate again when in 1918 the Menshevik Government of Jordania applied for German protection against the Turks, encouraged anti-Armenianism, and gave help to the White Armies. We have, as I said, this historical advantage. It is essential to know these facts if we are to make sense out of the Gehenna of Caucasian politics.

In contrast with the efforts of the Jordania group, which did not recognize the " necessity for an illegal

revolutionary Press, mass political agitation, and the organization of a revolutionary political struggle of the working class against Tsarism and the bourgeoisie," Stalin and his associates stood out for a bold policy. In 1900, at the dawn of a new century, after a Labour Day demonstration on May 1 in Tiflis, Stalin was compelled to go into hiding for his activities. This was his real baptism as a revolutionary leader.

Travelling, organizing, talking, writing, and arguing, he covered all the industrial centres of the Caucasus from Batum to Baku. The growth of these towns, in particular, was rapid. New and important industrial works, such as the Rothschild, Mantashevs, and Nobel concerns, were being opened, and a pipe-line had been laid down between Batum and Baku. The eleven thousand workers in Batum were treated like 'natives.' Russian colonialism demanded that they should work for a minimum of fourteen hours a day. Compulsory overtime often brought this figure to sixteen or seventeen hours. The wages were unbelievably small. They stood at sixty kopeks to one rouble a day. Translated into English money, this represents about 32s. to 40s. *per month.* To add insult to injury, Stolypin, the Tsar's 'Prime Minister,' was trying to form a 'Labour Party' as devoted to the interests of the working people, no doubt, as the Labour Front in Germany under Dr. Ley.

In March 1902 Stalin led the first great strike of six thousand workers of the Mantashev Batum Works. The police fired; fourteen people were slain, another forty wounded, and five hundred were arrested. Many were sentenced to the penal trek to Siberia, but the strike did

nevertheless succeed in ameliorating working conditions and improving rates of pay.

In April 1902 Stalin was arrested. During the whole of his revolutionary life he was arrested six times, exiled six times, and six times he escaped. He lived under conditions that would have killed any normal man. It is said that the intense Siberian cold cured him of incipient tuberculosis. Life weathered the man of steel with all the cruelty, the petty persecution that could ever fall to the lot of any man. The story of this period belongs in part to the history of the Caucasus. It was in the Caucasus that Stalin began his career. It was in the Caucasus, perhaps, that he learned the meaning of the "rights of small nations." No wonder then that in 1917, after the February Revolution, when Stalin returned from exile he was chosen to undertake the job of People's Commissar for Nationalities. The highest tribute to his efforts was paid by Lenin himself, when he said, "Only a man of authority could discharge the task, could avoid being swamped by petty intrigue."

Chapter V

WHY THE ARMENIANS LOST THEIR EARS

No small nation, not even the Jews, have had to endure such centuries of torment and massacre as the Armenian people. Gruesome statistics will follow, but our purpose is to find a reason behind the sorry tale of Armenian misfortune.

The anti-Armenianism fostered in the Caucasus by various national elements, in Georgia particularly, found its most savage expression during the many centuries the Armenians lived under the Turkish yoke. Their business ability and commercial prosperity, as we have already learned, was a constant source of envy to less fortunate and, perhaps, less capable rivals. The obstinacy with which they clung to Christianity was another aggravating factor. It was perhaps for this latter reason that they were hated and feared most by their Turkish overlords. The constant appeals of the Armenians for Russian aid were considered by the Turks to be tantamount to Fifth Column activity.

Their sufferings reached a zenith during the Armenian massacres shortly before the Russo-Turkish war in 1877. We must remember, however, that when Mr Gladstone thundered against the "unspeakable Turk" he was not to know of that great Renaissance which came to Turkey under Kemal Pasha. With the disappearance of the Turkish Sultanate also vanished the sadistic mass psychology which the Sultans and their viziers so sedulously cultivated against the Armenians.

The Russian Tsars, as soon as they obtained control over large parts of Armenia, began a policy of intensive Russification in 1836. They closed all elementary schools and forbade the teaching of the Armenian language. These harsh conditions were later relaxed to a certain extent. But all Armenian cultural activity was severely hampered until the Revolution. Of course, the Tsarist misrule was a cynical comment on Mohammedan tyranny. The Mohammedans may have frequently cut off Armenian ears and perpetrated other barbarities, but during long periods they left Armenian intellectual and religious institutions comparatively untouched.

After the resounding defeat administered to the "Red Sultan," Abdul Hamid, by Russian arms in 1877 Russia made a further inroad into Turkish Armenia, occupying Kars and Agadan. But there was still a large minority of Armenians left in Turkey. Abdul Hamid turned to them with paternal solicitude and decided to solve the Armenian question in a characteristic Hitler manner. He compelled thousands of Armenians to emigrate from Northern Anatolia ; between August 1895 and February 1896 something like ninety thousand Armenians were massacred. The conscience of the 'civilized world' stirred slowly. Gladstone denounced the Sultan as "the great criminal of the Palace."

A year after this appalling slaughter of Armenians, the Kaiser visited Abdul Hamid in Constantinople. Effusively he kissed his Turkish counterpart on the cheek and shook his blood-stained hand, calling himself the "true friend of Islam." The Kaiser did not know that the fear-oppressed Sultan wore a steel shirt under his uniform even on that auspicious occasion. (True, Abdul Hamid used to explain

to his tailor that he wore his steel shirt not for fear of assassination but as a lightning conductor.)

'German Imperialists had already begun to talk of the Berlin-Baghdad railway. Perhaps this explains why one of the Kaiser's retainers had the cool insolence to write, "What good has Gladstone done by reviling the Sultan ? Our Kaiser has chosen the more Christian way of repaying good for evil."

The trek of thousands of Armenians who fled over the Turkish border into Russian Armenia is a saga on its own. Naturally, the Russians lost no opportunity of using the Armenians to foster internal troubles in Turkey. It was with an eye to the future that Vorontsov-Dashkov wrote the following in 1911 to his Imperial master:

> It is necessary to take open action in the defence of the Armenians in Turkey, especially at the present time, so as not to antagonize but to prepare an advance. The sympathetic pop lation in those localities which, as matters stand at the present time, might willy-nilly prove to be in the sphere of our military operations . . . .

What this gentleman meant by "willy-nilly" was that this was a grand opportunity for Russia to intervene, since Turkey was engaged in the Balkan war against Bulgaria, Serbia, and Greece. The victory in 1912 of the Balkan Powers over Turkey made Russia postpone her plans.

Two years later the Great War broke out. The early successes of the Russians in the Caucasian theatre of war had terrible repercussions on the Turkish Armenians. The Turkish Government, having previously failed to remove all the Armenians from the northern areas, began

the programme of savage deportation. In this they received open German encouragement, although it must be said that a number of officials in Germany were horrified at the thoroughness with which the Turks carried out the programme.

Whole villages and settlements were ordered to take the road "and march south." If Nansen, the authority on Armenian misery, is to be believed Armenian girls became so plentiful in the slave markets that a virgin could be bought for three shillings; ninepence was paid for violated women, "whilst widows and children could be had almost for nothing."

Of the 18,000 Armenians driven out of Kharput and Sevas, only 350 reached Aleppo alive. Eleven out of 19,000 arrived in Mesopotamia from Erzerum. There were many local clashes. Armenians resisted, but their resistance was met by massacre. In any case, the Turks found little opposition. Able-bodied Armenians on both the Russian and Turkish side had been drafted into the respective armies.

The Armenian brigade on the Russian side numbered some 15,000 volunteers. They were a splendid body of men, well equipped and fanatical fighters. As the war progressed the number of volunteers swelled, so that by the end of the war more than 200,000 Armenian volunteers had given their lives for the Allied cause.

It is hardly surprising that the toll of massacres, of deportations, of revolution and war, should have destroyed 1,000,000 Armenians out of a population which numbered at that time somewhere round 1,800,000.

During the revolutionary period, for example, when

the Turks and Azerbaijan Tartars were in control of Baku, more than 20,000 Armenians were done to death in the space of a mere three days. I was too young to receive a permanent picture. I remember only the countless bundles, as they appeared to me at the time, that littered the street in front of our window.

THE PANZER GENERAL

A small boy, orphaned by the terrible massacre of Armenians during the last war, was saved by the timely intervention of a German Vice-Consul in Turkey. The Consul took a liking to the youngster, found him alert and intelligent, and when he returned to Berlin took the boy with him. Here the young man grew up and received his education. He became thoroughly Germanized. Use was soon found for his mechanical and military abilities. To-day he fights against his brother-Armenians in the Soviet Union—a queer twist of fate. The world knows him as General Guderian, Hitler's principal Panzer General.

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Chapter VI

BLOOD AND OIL

So far we have kept the word 'oil' out of the history of the Caucasus; but when we approach modern times oil enters into the drama as one of the principal characters. It has incited as much envy and as much bloodshed as gold. Oil, as a matter of fact, has grown more precious. The only excuse I can offer for taking the reader into a jungle of intrigues is that perhaps he may see in the tapestry of the past all the multitudinous threads which have gone to make the present.

The February Revolution of 1917 brought about a collapse on the Caucasian front, and the Turks, meeting feeble opposition, swept in. The representatives of the three most important Caucasian national parties—the Georgian Mensheviks, Armenian Dashnaks, and Azerbaijan Mussavats—were sitting in the Parliament of Petrograd, helping Kerensky to talk away his 'revolution.'

The Mensheviks, as we have seen, were Socialists with a strong national bias. Consequently the Socialism they tried to establish in Georgia was frequently indistinguishable from pure nationalism and reaction. The Dashnaks too were nominally Socialist. Their programme included the Socialization of land. But they also had a severe national bias. They dreamt of a "Greater Armenia" carved out of the body of Turkey and joined to Russian Armenia. The Russians, they hoped, would remain dis-

tant but powerful protectors. Some sections of the Dashnaks often acted as bodyguards to wealthy Armenians; others, in the Chicago manner, demanded protection money, threatening strikes if they were not paid. The Azerbaijan Mussavats and Daghestan Mountaineer Party carried no imitation Socialism on their banners. They were downright nationalists, Pan-Turk and Pan-Islam.

Even this short description is sufficient to show the irreconcilable character of the men who tried to rule the Caucasus for three years. No wonder the Georgians fought the Armenians, and the Armenians the Azerbaijans.

While Kerensky was a political factor the Caucasian Nationalists were prepared to see their countries part of the "Pink Empire" of the Russian Mensheviks. But when the Bolsheviks took power the Caucasian representatives scurried home, thoroughly bewildered and uncertain as to what step they should next take. They formed themselves into a Transcaucasian Federation and continued to maintain 'friendly relations' with Soviet Russia. They also maintained friendly relations with a great number of people, organizations, and states, which were openly hostile to Soviet Russia.

Events moved swiftly. At Brest-Litovsk the Germans imposed their peace "at the tip of a sword." Turkey demanded the return of those provinces ceded by her to Russia after the Russo-Turkish war—namely, Agadan, Kars, and Batum. The Soviets could do nothing but agree. The Georgians and Armenians protested hotly, but the Turks began to move on Batum.

Casting around for friends, the Georgian Mensheviks

decided to appeal to the Germans. This was a cunning move made in the sure knowledge that the German war-machine was experiencing a severe shortage of oil. Germany's air and submarine warfare was greatly restricted. So the paradoxical situation arose of the Germans saving "Socialist Georgia" from their allies, the Turks. This, the Mensheviks realized, needed some explanation. The people wondered whether it was quite proper to summon the emissaries of German Imperialism. The wolf, they said, was asked to look after the sheep.

But the Menshevik leaders were never lost for words. They issued a proclamation in which they said:

> The Georgian Government informs the population that the German troops which have arrived in Tiflis were invited by the Government of Georgia itself, and their task is to defend the frontiers of the Georgian Democratic Republic with the full consent and at the instigation of the Government of Georgia.

This invitation suited Ludendorff's plans admirably. He himself illuminates this piece of history in his War Memoirs. He makes it clear that the Germans had landed in order to obtain supplies of raw materials, or rather to prevent the Turks from pocketing everything there was to be had. "They had taken all available stores for themselves," he complains. "We could therefore expect oil from Baku only if we fetched it ourselves."

The Turks were palmed off with a pact engineered by the Germans which gave Turkey the right to receive oil through the Batum-Baku pipe-line free of all cost. Meanwhile the Germans settled down to harvest all the oil they could squeeze out of the Georgians. They commandeered the railways and naval supplies as well.

The arrival of the Germans broke up the Transcau-

casian Federation. Three nationalist republics appeared on the scene. The old hates and suspicions flared up once again. There was an all-round screaming for frontier rectifications. Everybody wanted to be a 'Greater' Georgia or Armenia or Azerbaijan. In Georgia Armenians were hounded out of every administrative office. Chaos and conflagration was all this famous 'liberty' brought to the Caucasus.

There was one snag, however, to these German pipe dreams. The workers of Baku had established a Soviet regime in April 1918, and the Turks were itching to "liberate the city" for their own benefit. The Mussavats of Baku and Azerbaijan—that is, the Nationalists—performed some subtle political somersaults. While they counted on Turkish aid they invited the British to help themselves to Baku. What the Mussavats really wanted was to ride to power on anyone willing to supply the bayonets.

THE BRITISH IN THE CAUCASUS

The British arrived some time in August 1918. The Soviet administration dispersed. But barely a few weeks passed before the Turks attacked the town, and the British retired to Enzeli. A return match was played, however, in Baku when the Turks and the Germans left the Caucasus after the Armistice of November 11.

Whether Britain entertained any real hopes of a permanent occupation of the Baku oilfields is doubtful. The defeat of the White Armies, of Denikin in particular, had left the south of Russia wide open to attack by the Red forces. The post-war period, with its strikes and its turmoils in Ireland and elsewhere, was hardly the time for consolida-

tion, although, no doubt, there were strategists and financially interested parties to urge the retention of Baku.

In the meantime the various Caucasian Governments were recognized *de facto* by the Allies. The British forces were preparing to evacuate Baku, and there was some talk of handing the oilfields over to Italy. But Italy declined, although many Italian ships sailed to the Caucasus and came away laden with carpets and manganese. Some helped to carry away the remnants of Denikin's army.

As no one seemed willing to hold the Caucasian baby, the British forces were slowly withdrawn. As they left the populace rose to greet the Red Army, which reoccupied Baku in April 1920. Thereafter direct British interference in the Caucasus was confined to shipments of arms for the Menshevik forces.

WHY DID THE BRITISH GO TO THE CAUCASUS ?

This question may be answered in quite a number of different ways. No doubt one of the principal reasons was that Britain, as one of the victorious parties of the Great War, feared the growth and consolidation of the revolutionary movement in Russia. But an equally important factor was the fear that the Baku oilfields would fall into enemy hands.

There is a third factor. The occupation of Baku and Batum was one of those remaining spasms of suspicion which prevailed in Britain against Russia, no matter what Government was at its head. The old Imperial fear of a Russian attack on India, the bogy of Russian expansionism, was a phoenix perpetually rising out of the ashes. It serves as an excellent example of how Anglo-Russian suspicions

and animosities have always redounded to Germany's favour. There is no point in raking over the old embers. We believe they are dead. They belong to an era of mistakes and misunderstandings which has passed.

AND SO THE CURTAIN FALLS

At the withdrawal of the British forces from Baku incessant rioting broke out in support of the Red Army. The wearied and divided 'independent' states had refused to make common cause with Russia against the interventionists and the White generals. This intransigent attitude on their part was an act of folly. For it was precisely the White generals who shouted the loudest for "a Russia great and indivisible." Had victory fallen to their arms they would have absorbed the Georgias, Armenias, and Azerbaijans into a fist which promised to squeeze harder even than that of the Tsars.

Certainly the facade of Socialism which covered the Menshevik regime in Georgia did not prevent, as we have seen, domestic and internal quarrels with the Armenians. The Armenian Dashnaks at the same time closed their eyes to the revengeful terrorism that was waged against the Moslems. The Caucasus was rent with accusations and counter-accusations. Said the Armenians to the Georgians, "You brought in the Germans." Said the Georgians to the Mussavats, the Azerbaijan nationalists, "You invited the Turks." Said all the nationalists to their rebellious people, "You are bringing in the Communists."

The food position grew desperate, because the rich Soviet North Caucasian areas refused to send grain to the Mensheviks who were persecuting their political brethren.

In Stalin's words, "Even the workers of sleepy Tiflis, the bulwark of Menshevik counter-revolution, began to forsake the Transcaucasian Commissariat and expressed themselves in favour of Soviet power."

The Turks in the meantime, having recovered strength, began to move in the direction of Batum. But the Menshevik Government, fearing the Red Army more than the Turks, sent all its forces to the north and north-east. The Red Army attacked and dispersed their forces. The Georgian General Kvinitadze retreated from his defensive lines round Tiflis, and the city welcomed the Communist partisans of the Caucasus and the Red Army on February 25, 1921. The Menshevik leaders had fled. They appeared in Paris a few days later and were there solemnly recognized by the French Government as the legal Government of Georgia.

No fairer obituary exists than that which Louis Fischer pays to the Menshevik experiment in his book *The Soviets in World Affairs*. He says :

> The question is : Would the Menshevik regime have persisted but for the Red Army ? I think the answer is in the negative. There had never been an independent Georgian Menshevik republic. It was first a German dependency and then a British colony. When the British evacuated they knew and said they were handing it back to Russia, for no other alternative exists. Georgia, with her geographic position and economic dependence, must adhere to Russia, or be held by England, or fall to the lot of Turkey. She cannot stand alone. Her location is too strategic. She is too weak and too poor economically—Russia feeds her. The Mensheviks themselves realized this first, and better than anyone else. It determined every move in their foreign relations.

Georgia was not " handed back to Russia," of course. She was handed back to the Georgians—a people the Menshevik experiment lamentably failed to provide for, both in economy and defence. *Georgia uber Alles* was hardly the slogan that other nationalist elements would accept.

The three years of Menshevik rule in the Caucasus shattered many of the bonds which had previously united the Caucasians in their fight against Tsarist oppression. Stalin himself, on returning to the Caucasus, was astonished at the changes he beheld. Speaking in Tiflis in July 1921, shortly after the establishment of the Transcaucasian Soviet Socialist Republics, he said :

> I remember the years 1905-17, when complete fraternal solidarity was to be observed among the workers and the toiling population of the Transcaucasian nationalities in general, when bonds of brotherhood held together the Armenian, Georgian, Azerbaijan, and Russian workers in one socialist family. Now, upon my arrival in Tiflis, I have been astounded by the absence of the former solidarity between the workers of the nationalities of Transcaucasia. . . . Obviously the three years' existence of nationalist governments in Georgia (Mensheviks), in Azerbaijan (Mussavats), and in Armenia (Dashnaks) did not pass without effect. By carrying out their national policies, by working among the toilers in a spirit of aggressive nationalism, these nationalist governments finally brought matters to the point where each of these small countries found itself surrounded by a hostile nationalist atmosphere which deprived Georgia and Armenia of Russian grain and Azerbaijan oil, and Azerbaijan and Russia of goods going through Batum—not to speak of armed clashes (Georgian-Armenian war) and massacres (Armenian-Tartar), the natural result of the nationalist policy. . . . It is therefore the immediate task of the Communists of Georgia to put up a ruthless fight against nationalism, to restore the old fraternal bonds between

the various nationalities, bonds that had existed before the nationalist Menshevik governments came on the scene, and thus create that healthy atmosphere of mutual confidence which is necessary for concerted economic effort on the part of the Transcaucasian Soviet Republics, and for the economic revival of Georgia.

This is perhaps all that need be said of Menshevik Socialism and leadership. One word about the leaders themselves. Many of them were men of culture, of intelligence, and of kindly, well-intentioned dispositions. But the tide of history proved too strong for them. Although during the period of Tsarist rule they often put up noteworthy resistance, it was always nullified by their timidity. They tried to resist the force of a people whose only salvation lay in unity. They brought hatred between the respective nations of the Caucasus. They lent themselves to foreign intrigue.

They received much sympathy in foreign countries. Democracy is a glib and easy thing to talk about; it is another to practise.

THE TREATY OF UNITY AND BROTHERHOOD

Turkey, as we have seen, has played a vital role in the Caucasus. This role was often unjust; her exactions were often cruel. The tears of the past can water none of the flowers of the future. It was therefore symbolic and right, perhaps, that when the New Turkey and the New Russia both found their souls they should set a seal on the years of darkness and war.

The Treaty of Unity and Brotherhood which was signed in Moscow on March 16, 1921, was a historical document. It returned to Turkey the districts of Kars and Agadan

which she had lost in the Russo-Turkish war in 1878, regained at Brest-Litovsk in 1918, and lost again by the Treaty of Sevres in 1920. But this Treaty of Unity and Brotherhood signified more than territorial agreement. It brought Russian aid to Turkey at a time when she had no friend in Europe. It established a relationship which had never existed before—that of peace and friendship. Since the Treaty of 1921 many other treaties have been signed between the Soviet Union and the Turkish Republic.

The German efforts to create suspicion and animosity have constantly been wrecked by the goodwill of the Russian and Turkish peoples.

THE STRUGGLE FOR CAUCASIAN UNITY

The harm done by three years of Menshevik rule could not be corrected by merely setting up Soviets in Georgia and Armenia. Traces of national Chauvinism were to be found even in the ranks of the Georgian and Armenian Communist Parties. The murmur of fratricidal conflict did not pass with the Mensheviks.

Despite severe warnings to stop squabbling and get down to the hard business of administration, Lenin's demand that "a regional economic organ for the entire Transcaucasus should be established," was either ignored or intentionally hedged about with real or imaginary difficulties. With inane persistence the separate republics continued to run a monetary system of their own. They even went so far as to maintain customs barriers and frontier points for inspection of merchandise.

But that was not all. At the first Congress of the Communist Party in Georgia, Budu Mdivani, a member

of the Georgian Central Committee, said, "As to the delimitation of frontiers, we told the Armenian Communists that there were no disputes between us, but that there was lack of clarity, and that, for tactical reasons, it was better to take a referendum in the regions in dispute."

If the ideas of the Budu Mdivanis had prevailed the Caucasus would have gone through a blood bath for nothing. The very people who ought to have insisted on Caucasian unity were replaying the cracked record of the Mensheviks. To inquiries from Moscow as to why the three republics continued to have three different trade and administrative organizations, the explanation was given that "Georgia was not ready. The Soviets had only just been established. It was impossible to unite their efforts so soon."

Naturally, these tactics suited all the dispersed but still vociferous elements like the Mensheviks, Dashnaks, and Mussavats. A fruitful land was being threatened with starvation. Unemployment was rife. Despite the decree nationalizing land, a large number of landowners not only lived on their estates but continued about their business, especially the business of stirring up trouble and organizing centres of resistance. The condition of the peasants was no better than it had been under the Mensheviks.

The Central Party Bureau was worried. Emphatic orders were sent to create a Transcaucasian Federation. Budu Mdivani and the group of 'Deviationists' that followed him talked and temporized and opposed. They especially resisted the granting of autonomous areas to the Ossetians, Abkhasians, and Adjarians. Local govern-

ment was not their idea of government when it affected minority races. Procrastination became a political weapon.

The last desperate measure of resistance came in 1924. The Mensheviks and their friends staged a revolt which lasted for a few days and petered out for lack of support. A writer in the British *Asiatic Review* of January 1927 considers that : "The failure of the Georgian revolt in 1924, which was largely encouraged by optimistic misrepresentation by the Menshevik *emigres* in Paris, has done little to maintain their memories in honour."

The Transcaucasian Socialist Soviet Federation, established nominally in March 1924, was now a reality. Complete autonomy in cultural affairs, education, and the use of languages both in schools and courts of law, were granted to the component members of Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan. But a common economy was established. The political centre of the Federation was Tiflis. Fourteen years later, when the benefits of unity had become apparent, the Transcaucasian S. S. Federation was dissolved, and in 1936 three Soviet Socialist Republics of Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan reached the status of independent republics enjoying sovereign rights. The clock had not moved back. It had moved forward.

QUISLING

The original Vidkum Quisling himself.

A far cry from Norway to the Caucasus ? Not at all. When the humanitarian Fridtjof Nansen went into the Caucasus in 1925 to inquire into the condition of Armenian refugees he took as his secretary the obscure army

officer, Captain Quisling. In the preface of one of his books Nansen thanks Quisling "for his untiring kindness as a travelling companion and for the valuable help he has given the author through his knowledge of Russian and his many-sided attainments."

In a chapter devoted exclusively to Caucasian quislings and their propaganda we shall see how the original Quisling's "knowledge of Russian and his many-sided attainments" gave his untutored Fuhrer more than a platonic interest in the Caucasus.

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Chapter VII

SOVIET DEMOCRACY

For some unaccountable reason many of Moscow's tramdrivers are Georgians. What made these legendary figures choose this particular profession I do not know. But the speed and bravado with which they drive these trams of theirs are the terror of every jay-walker. The lesson, once learned, is never forgotten for the apocalyptic speed properly belongs to a horse and not such a sedate conveyance as a tram.

"The Georgians are good fellows," people say with a friendly wink. Their verve is admired by every one, and the Georgian himself is very proud of being a Georgian. If you ask him his nationality he will in all likelihood say that he is a Soviet citizen; but he will also add that he comes from the Soviet Socialist Republic of Georgia.

There is pride in the Union and pride too in one's race, for the simple reason that there are no minority problems, there is no feeling of inferiority. The minority rights are strictly respected, and the small nations govern themselves. We have seen how throughout the whole history of the Caucasus there runs the strong strand of freedom. We have seen how the people of Armenia, Georgia, and Azerbaijan have attained their freedom. How do they govern themselves now that they are free ?

THE UNION REPUBLICS

Many journalists and others, seeking a short cut, no doubt, refer to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics as "Russia," or as an afterthought, "Soviet Russia." These are loose terms and in no way suggest that Russia, or rather the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic, is but one of sixteen republics that compose the U. S. S. R.

In 1936, with the inauguration of the Stalin Constitution, the Transcaucasian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic was dissolved into three republics. Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan proudly carried the S. S. R. after their names. They are known as constituent republics—that is to say, they are autonomous in the sense that they possess sovereign rights and are free, if they so desire, to secede from the Union.

To-day there are sixteen constituent republics in the Soviet Union. They elect a common or Union government which is responsible for the defence of the Union and which promulgates and co-ordinates economic planr ing as well as maintains those essential Socialist laws on which the constitution is based. All Union affairs are discussed. and laws and emendations effected through a body known as the Supreme Soviet.

The Supreme Soviet is divided into two chambers : the Soviet of the Union and the Soviet of Nationalities. (The Chairman of the Soviet of Nationalities, N. Shvernik, recently visited Great Britain. He did not come in this capacity, however, but as secretary of the All-union Central Committee of Trade Unions.)

Both assemblies of the Supreme Soviet are elected for a period of four years by all citizens over the age of

eighteen, regardless of nationality or race, religion, educational qualifications, or sex.

The Soviet of the Union is elected on the basis of one representative for every three hundred thousand inhabitants of the Union. The Soviet of Nationalities, on the other hand, is elected on a regional basis—that is to say, every Union Republic sends twenty five representatives, every autonomous republic sends eleven, every autonomous province sends five, and every national region sends one. It is by this means that complete equality between the nationalities is preserved. Although the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic has a population of some hundred millions and consequently holds about half of all the seats in the Soviet of the Union, its representation in the Soviet of Nationalities is twenty-five members—that is, no more and no less than the representatives sent from the other Union Republics. So Azerbaijan with its 3,210,000 population carries exactly the same weight in the deliberations of the Soviet of Nationalities as the much larger Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic.

But besides these Union Republics, with their populations counted in millions, there are other smaller units known as autonomous republics, autonomous provinces, and national regions, whose populations may be counted in thousands. In the Soviet Union there are some forty nationalities with populations of more than 50,000. By this regional subdivision it means that not one of them is without its own government, directly responsible for home affairs to its electorate.

This careful provision of self-government of minorities

is demonstrated particularly in the Caucasus, where in a comparatively small area so many diverse nations live. Thus, in the Georgian S.S.R. there are two autonomous republics and one autonomous province:

The Abkhasian A.S.S.R.
The Adjarian A.S.S.R.
The South Ossetian Autonomous Province.

In Azerbaijan there is one autonomous republic and one autonomous province:

Nakhechevan A.S.S.R.
Nagorny-Karabagh Autonomous Province.

The Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic is homogeneous.

Not all the Caucasian republics and provinces are to be found, however, in the three Union Republics of Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Armenia. The R. S. F. S. R. includes among territories stretching as far as the Pacific Ocean the following areas specific to this book:

Daghestan A. S. S. R.,
Chechen-Ingush A. S. S. R.,
Kabardino-Balkarian A. S. S. R.,
North Ossetian A. S. S. R.,
Karachaevo A. P.,
Adigiesk A. P.,
and North Caucasian Territory.

Many of these autonomous republics and provinces had their status advanced by the 1936 Constitution. In effect, this has meant a decentralization of local affairs, which has greatly added to the self-respect of the inhabitants besides developing greater self-reliance. One can no longer call these republics and provinces 'minorities' in the sense that their rights are guaranteed merely by

the benevolence of a central government which can at any time change its mind, such as has happened in the worst instances of Balkan politics. There are no 'Croatian problems' in the U. S S. R.

The key to these republics, autonomous provinces, and national regions, is the word "Soviet." The word simply means "Council." Each republic has its own Supreme Soviet, with its People's Commissars and officials responsible to the citizens of that republic. Every city, town, and village has its Soviet as well. By this means the electorate has the widest possible responsibility for all the organs of state.

These constitutional facts are important. These Soviets are sturdy blossoms of the people's will. The frantic stream of racial propaganda which Hitler has tried to filter into the Caucasus consequently makes no sense whatsoever. His gift of 'national freedom' merely evokes a horselaugh.

But how has the Caucasus used its freedom ? How have the various nationalities moved towards an ordered and progressive society ? What makes them feel that an attack on the Ukraine or White Russia or any other part of the Soviet Union is an attack directed against themselves ? The answers lie perhaps in co-operation, education, and the great cultural interest which every nationality in the Soviet Union feels for another. The poetry of the Georgians, their plays, are admired not only in Moscow but throughout the whole length and breadth of the Soviet land. The symphonies of the Armenian Khachaturyan are played in the concert halls of the Far East. The cultural and economic ties, the common way of life—these are the emissaries of fraternity.

HUNTING FOR THE ABC

Education was, perhaps, the greatest problem of the Caucasus. The same problem, of course, had to be faced in all parts of the Soviet Union. But here in the Caucasus dwelt people primitive, perhaps, even by the standards of the Ukrainian and Byelorussian peasant. The scattered *auls*, the independent village communities, had for centuries pursued their own way of life despite invaders and despite the Tsars. As if their unhygienic and poverty-stricken existence was not enough, they governed themselves with fierce mountain laws which included the blood feud, an exaggerated sense of honour, marriage by purchase, and, in the Moslem districts, that symbol of feminine subservience, the veil.

What could sweep away these cobwebs, cobwebs of iron that had shackled them and made them prisoners of their own ignorance ? The Revolution that had burst upon Tsarist Russia flooded the hills as well. But in the mountains men were inaccessible. They were proud, hating intruders. Socialism to them was either a foreign word, or, when it was explained to them, they said, "But isn't our communal life Socialist ?" Propagandists and teachers had a hard time in those early years. But neither indifference nor even gun-shots discouraged them. These crusaders of a new idea suffered hardships as great as any missionary has known in the wilds of Africa.

I have mentioned a few of the birds of paradox in the Caucasus, with their multitude of languages and customs. But what could you do when even as late as 1933 an expedition sent to the wildest parts of the Caucasus quite unexpectedly came across a negro village ? These negroes

were living in the most primitive fashion, and when asked about their ancestry replied that they were descended from the slaves bought by Georgian nobles many hundreds of years ago in the slave markets of Constantinople.

Add to these surprises the fact that more than 70 per cent. of the various nationalities inhabiting the Caucasus were completely without an alphabet, and the problem of education is held up until such a time as you have been able to teach them the rudimentary signs of an ABC that you still have to discover !

Take another tribe, the Agules—a people barely eight thousand strong. Imagine writing even a simple grammar for them when their nouns have thirty-six cases (as against seven in Russian and six in Latin). In the Republic of Daghestan there were eighty-one different peoples speaking three hundred and twenty different languages and dialects. Most of them were completely 'alphabet-blind.'

It is hardly remarkable, therefore, that Lenin's dictum that " without an ABC, there is no such thing as politics, but only gossip and prejudice," sank deeply into the minds of political workers and educationalists. To speak of collective farms, of Socialist labour, of the equality of women, without first finding these people an alphabet was like hammering a roof to an unbuilt house !

Of course, the state of education differed widely from people to people and district to district. The Georgians, for example, enjoyed considerable literacy, if compared with their kindred people, the Adjars. Prior to the Revolution the area round Batum (now the Adjar A.S.S.R.), with a population of about 100,000 people, had only twenty-four

schools with an aggregate of 1875 pupils. Only 3 per cent. of the population could either read or write.

In Georgia the percentage of illiteracy was lower, no doubt because of the presence of the middle classes which comprised about 10 per cent. of the total population. The urban population also contained middle-class Armenians and Russians. In 1912 even Tsarist statistics admit that more than 83 per cent. of the Caucasus was illiterate. I know that in Azerbaijan, apart from the town districts, there were whole villages where only one man could read or write, and that was usually the mullah—the Moslem priest In the province of the Kuban, the district of the Cossacks, there were twenty-seven secondary schools. In districts less favoured, such as the province of Kars in Armenia, there were only two.

A fascinating story remains to be told of how philologists went for long expeditions among the various nationalities, studied their tongues, and provided them with a written language. Their alphabet was Latin and not Russian. The Latin was far simpler; it also removed any suspicion of attempted Russification.

To-day in Adjaria there are 430 primary and secondary schools, attended by 38,000 children. As late as 1930 80 per cent. of the population of the North Ossetian and Kabarda-Balkarian Republics (where some of the finest breeds of horses come from) was still illiterate. This figure has been reduced to nil.

The same marked progress is observed in Azerbaijan. Previously the schools were concentrated largely in the towns. As there were large colonies of Russians living in Baku as well as other foreigners, there were far more

Russian schools than those which catered for the 'natives.' In 1914-15 there were 976 schools with 73,000 pupils. To-day there are more than 3600 schools with over 700,000 pupils.

But education has done something more than to teach people how to read and write. It has mixed the nationalities of the Caucasus in the class-room. Friendly rivalry has played a great part in breaking down the old barriers of suspicion and traditional animosity between Christian and Moslem.

Education is served, as in the rest of the Soviet Union, by two types of schools—the seven-year school and the ten-year school. Children of the ages of 8-15 attend the former, and of 8-18 the latter. Education is free and compulsory to the age of fifteen. Ten-year schools had been founded in all urban areas by 1937. The rural areas should have had their ten-year schools by 1942; but it is not unlikely that the war may have interfered with this original plan. A small school fee is paid after the fifteenth year, although this is remitted if the pupil receives 'excellent' marking in two-thirds of his subjects and a 'credit' or 'good' in the other third.

Of special pride to the Caucasus are the forty-one higher institutions with their forty thousand students. The universities of Tiflis, Erivan, and Baku rank amongst the best in the Soviet Union. Why, even Khevsurs, until recently so illiterate and garbed in fantastic chain-mail, study at the Workers' Faculty in Tiflis. The Georgian Academy of Sciences, affiliated to the U.S.S.R. Academy, has made a great contribution to Soviet science, covering such diverse fields as archaeology, mathematics, physics,

study of languages, and botanical research. This latter research has been particularly helpful to the fruit growing industry.

Significant too in the conquest of illiteracy is the development of the Press. Not only are the great national newspapers like *Izvestia*, *Pravda*, and *Red Star* read in the Caucasus, but important publications such as the Baku *Rabochi* and the Tiflis *Communisti* cater for the reading public of the capital cities of the Azerbaijan and Georgian Soviet Republics. As many as seven newspapers are printed in the Republic of Adjaria alone. Azerbaijan publishes 123 different papers.

Many of the correspondents are not professional journalists at all but industrial workers or men fighting in the Red Army. The Press is a potent factor not only of education but as a literary field for poets and writers. And in war-time the Press, through its many soldier-correspondents, serves to inspire the rear. It mirrors the fighting will of all the varied nationalities of the Soviet Caucasus.

WOMEN

When the old gods came tumbling down in the Caucasus after the Revolution, and education became a major industry, among the first to benefit were women.

The emancipation of women was not, of course, exclusive to the Caucasus. " A victory for Socialism is impossible," said Lenin, " until a whole half of toiling mankind, the working woman, enjoys equal rights with men ; and until she no longer is kept a slave by her household and family. "

This clarion call was to echo long in the hills, however, before complete emancipation came about. Centuries of superstition and religious fanaticism could not be wiped away in a trice, however vigorously one plied the duster. Education and intensive propaganda of a reasoned sort, as well as the gradual absorption of more and more women in industry, proved the best means of liberating women from the harem-cage and the unhygienic thick veil.

The woman's position was undoubtedly worse in the Moslem parts of the Caucasus. In Georgia, certainly among the educated middle class, women had considerable freedom, although, of course, they too had as few judicial rights as their Russian sisters.

I do not believe, however, that the woman's lot was far better in Georgia simply on grounds of Christianity. In Armenia, for example, a country with a more ancient record of adherence to Christianity than Georgia, a savage patriarchal system that would have pleased the misogynist soul of St. Paul himself prevailed, and women, peasant women certainly, did not sit down at the same table as men. Even the grandmothers were expected to kiss the hands of their grandsons by way of greeting. Whether these customs were formed by a strict observance of the Old Testament or influenced by frequent Moslem occupations of the country, I cannot say. To-day such table manners would raise a smile.

The Georgians always had an inherent respect for women. ***Europsi di Casso***—Europeans by accident as they were—they were divided between the civilizations of the East and the West. Possibly, too, they had a greater sense of humour than the Armenians. Another explanation is

that the age of high chivalry came earlier to Georgia than to most countries of Europe and the Near East. And this age has never left the Georgians. The polish of their manners, the courtesy with which they treated their womenfolk, have not changed, although, perhaps, the emphasis on equality between the sexes has removed the deference felt for woman as the weaker or helpless sex.

It was, curiously enough, a woman, St Nino, whom the Georgians called " The Illuminator." She brought them Christianity. With another woman, the peerless Queen Tamara, they associate their Golden Age.

In contrast to the many proverbs of the east which make fun at the expense of the feminine sex, the Georgians have a saying that " Dogs don't bark at a woman." Perhaps out of deference to Tamara, the Georgian peasant-woman, whose life was worn down by cares and toil, was nevertheless the source of good advice for her menfolk. Stalin's own mother is an example of a clear-headed matriarch who wanted to do the best for her boy.

We have seen the Georgian reversal of *mama* for father and *deda* for mother. But even in writing this I made a mistake which is rarely made in Georgia—I put the 'father' first. In Georgia you always speak of the feminine first—'a sister and her brother,' not 'a brother and his sister.'

Among the Kubachi too, a woman was held in high regard. She paid no dowry when she married. There were even schools—primitive ones, of course—where religious lore was taught to women alone. Possibly this was a relic of Roman influence, a transplantation of the cult of the

Vestal Virgins. Children, moreover, took their mother's name and not their father's.

These examples are, perhaps, nothing but the survival in a mild form of the matriarchal civilization which held sway in the Caucasus many centuries before history came to be written down or even remembered. Nevertheless, these better features in the treatment of women must be weighed against the harshness and inequality suffered previously by women in other parts of the Caucasus.

"ASK YOUR WIFE FOR ADVICE AND DO THE OPPOSITE"

It is not generally known that Mohammed himself had nothing whatsoever to do with putting the veil on the face of the Eastern woman or denying her the right to education. When he was asked, "O messenger of God, what relation is most worthy of doing good to?" he replied: "Your mother." This he repeated three times. "And after her, your father."

And as for the veil, that came considerably later, at the close of the tenth century It was Walid II who ordered the seclusion of women and the donning of the veil. He was a jealous profligate whose evil example was extended to his courtiers and the merchant classes, Little did this Walid know how much he hampered the development of the Moslem world with what to him was a delicious piece of coquetry!

Before him Moslem fathers were proud to take as their surnames the names of daughters who had reached eminence in poetry or philosophy. But by the time that Islam came to the Caucasus the veil had already become

a tenet of religion. The ugly 'chadra' was to mask the beautiful faces of the wives and daughters that Islam had proselytized. But things did not stop there. Theologians earnestly debated whether woman had a soul at all—a favourite enough topic of conversation, I believe, even in the Christian Europe of St Thomas Aquinas.

Soulless, surrounded by terrible voodoo, a woman was forbidden to touch a Daghestan man with her hand. If for some reason or another he had to come into contact with her he was careful to see that his hand was wrapped up in linen. The Khevsurs, with their primitive fear of pregnancy, sent their women into cowsheds at the time of childbirth. But the position of women among the Khevsurs was paradoxical. She had far greater privileges than her Moslem sister. She was able to divorce her husband at will, and nothing acted like a woman's plea in the midst of a family feud. If she threw a handkerchief between the contestants they were in honour bound to cease hacking each other.

But if the veil made a woman something between man and beast, the marriage custom of buying a wife, known as *kalym*, reduced her to the status of a chattel and not a very valuable chattel at that. It is odd how ardently men fought for their freedom in the hills, and how oppressive they were to their own womenfolk.

To raise a sum enough to pay his *kalym* for a wife, a man would often become a bandit for a year or two and cheerfully rob and slay in order to find the price. Indeed, the familiar marriage oath of the mountains ran something like this: "I will not be your wife if you have any fear; I will not be your wife if you are poor, or if

you haven't stolen a Cossack's horse or killed at least one man."

Women were expected to do all the hard work. If they had refused they and their children would have starved. For the man the wars and the blood feuds, the singing and dancing and gun-cleaning ; for the woman the heavy agricultural work, the reaping, the sowing, the weaving. Girls at the age of eight were quickly deprived of their childhood and sent to the communal well to draw water which frequently had to be carried up steep slopes. No wonder age came quickly, and death quicker still.

It was the woman who developed the native crafts such as carpet-making, teaching her hordes of children the fine poetry of colour. It was she who invented and sang the sad lullabies, wondering whether her newborn son was destined to perish in a blood feud that had been started by his great-grandfather. The complicated rules of the blood feud struck mercilessly at a woman's home. If a man had killed a member of another family, whether by accident or by intention, the whole of the dead man's family would chase after him until they had laid him low or he became exhausted enough to pay an exorbitant ransom in gold and sheep.

If the slayer was not to be found the price was visited on his kin. The law of the blood feud even condemned a man if his roof was slippery or so poorly built that the thief, in carrying out his business, fell down and was killed. The thief's family would think nothing of demanding recompense from the householder in such a case. The mountains were full of chasing men or men

being chased, despite efforts of well-intentioned kings and rulers such as Tamara.

And yet the woman survived. She carried her sackfuls of earth, as women do in Italy to this day, to make a patch on the high slopes to grow food on which to sustain her children and her lord and master.

These conditions do not belong to antiquity. They prevailed barely twenty years ago. Customs and traditions, unlike living things, cling on despite time's decay. Reforms came slowly. Patience was needed. Propaganda was directed to simple things such as providing warm cloaks for women. It sounds odd, but in Daghestan women were not allowed to possess woollen cloaks. It was just another sign of the superiority of man to wear thick protective *shubas* or *burkas* and to let his women go about in flapping cottons. As a result many women, of course, died from chills and pneumonia. But there were many more to take their place.

Intensive propaganda, a call to honour and common sense ,finally persuaded the mountaineers to provide their wives with woollen cloaks. There were different ways of putting those that refused to shame.

Nor did the *chadra*, the veil, slip off women's faces at night. The priests, as in Turkey and Persia, fulminated against such an abomination. Yet they themselves knew that women did not wear the veil while they worked in the fields. Imagine the great difficulty of trying to tend a machine with a veil slipping into its vitals !

Literacy, however, brought new ideas. The *chadra* has almost disappeared. A few old women, perhaps, in inaccessible places still show their big eyes and nothing

else. But it was the development of industries which recruited thousands of women that finally dealt the blow to the *chadra* and removed the economic basis of sex-inequality. They got equal pay for equal work. In Georgia to-day more than 43 per cent. of all industrial workers are women. In Armenia the figure is higher. Women industrial workers in Azerbaijan in 1940 amounted to about 32 per cent. of the total. Women in the Caucasus have made their names as Stakhanovites. They have received honours and rewards, become heroes of Soviet labour. In the oil industry, particularly, women like Kemal Razimova are held up for emulation.

Women judges sit in the courts. They legislate and administrate in the Supreme Soviet of the Union and the Soviets of the autonomous republics. By electoral law a number of women must be included amongst the representatives sent up to the Soviet of Nationalities. The works of the Armenian poetess Sabella Yessayan are read throughout the Caucasus. Airwomen, parachute jumpers, barristers, journalists, doctors—no field of endeavour has been left unexplored by women. They are doing what men thought they never could.

If the Caucasus has become one of the happiest and most prosperous regions of the Soviet Union women have done much to make it so. In the trials of war their share of hard work and sacrifice will not be forgotten.

HOUSING

" If you would have eternal remembrance, pile up stones !" advises an Eastern proverb.

The Pyramids are there to remind us of the Pharaohs.

The great abbey of Westminster we associate with Edward the Confessor. Chartres, Ulm, St Paul's—these masterpieces glorify many worthy names and institutions. But in this utilitarian age the buildings that will be remembered are not those put up by the vainglorious Duces or Fuhrers, but the piles in which living men abide, rear their children, seek their amusement, and read their books.

The problem of housing in the Soviet Union, and in the Caucasus in particular, was not, of course, approached in this vainglorious manner.

In Baku, my native city, before the Revolution there were two towns within the town—the old and the new. And the old ramshackle Baku, the Baku of the workers, was the larger. A couple of decades later, and the old, with its narrow streets and smelly Asiatic lanes, retreated before the onslaught of the house- and road-builders. The crumbly grey-white bricks have given way to concrete and to stone.

The 'modern city' before the Revolution was the exclusive habitat of the upper classes. It had its water-closets, its telephones, and central heating, but only in a few streets. Round the corner was the bazaar civilization, the slums, hugging the stone peripheries of the mosque lost in a maze of crooked streets. In the courtyard of the merchant, behind the windowless front of decaying houses, an almond-tree bloomed. In the courtyard of the poor, dogs ate refuse. An exaggerated picture? Ask the builders who swept up the city.

Housing conditions in the mountain villages were even worse. Houses were either stone fortresses, cold and dim or made of baked mud with a stone base perhaps. Those

who have travelled in the Middle East, in Persia in particular, are familiar with the upstairs living-room with its uneven and cracked floor. Lying down, you can watch a jostling bunch of chickens pecking into the maize or flirting with the rooster.

But the problem of housing could not be solved merely by replacing the old with something better. The rapid development of towns threw a heavy strain on the building industry, as may be seen from the following population table :

Towns	December 1926	January 1939	Percentage Increase
Baku . . .	453,000	809,000	79
Tbilisi (Tiflis) .	294 000	519,000	78
Yereva (Erivan).	64,000	200,000	210
Grozny . .	97,000	172,000	78
Kutaisi . .	48,000	81,000	69
Batumi (Batum).	48,000	70,000	46
Maikop . .	53,000	67,000	27
Kislovodsk . .	26,000	51,000	98

Baku doubled its population between 1926 and 1940. If the 1940 figure is compared with the 1913 figure of 237,000 the increase is even more astonishing. Similarly, the growth of Erivan, the capital of the Soviet Republic of Armenia, increased 210 per cent. between 1926 and 1940. Yet in 1913 the population of Erivan was in the region of 34,000. The increase over a period of twenty-seven years stands therefore in the region of something like 600 per cent.!

The choice before Soviet planners was this : "Shall we develop industry at the risk of an inflated population having to endure bad housing conditions for a number of years, or shall we maintain industry at the same tempo as our rehousing ? "

The first course was obviously the best. The development of industries inevitably meant that large budgetry allowances could be apportioned to the building industry. A further argument was used. It was better to raise the standard of the majority by a little than to make stupendous improvements for the few.

As early as 1928, that is to say, at the inauguration of the First Five-year Plan, thirty-five cities in the Transcaucasus were scheduled for replanning. The building trade, however, as a light industry did not develop at the same rate as the heavy industries until about the Second Five-year Plan. Prefabrication. the standardization of building material on an enormous scale, was inaugurated and did much to improve the situation. Moreover, countless communal facilities provided by the State such as workers' clubs, Pioneer Palaces, not to mention theatres, cinemas, Parks of Rest and Culture, not only took away the sting from crowded living conditions, but helped to create from a ' lack ' that profound sense of communal life which characterizes Soviet society to-day.

Each year has registered improvements, so that people after an absence of a year or two have difficulty in recognizing their native city or village Enormous appropriations were set aside each year for the building industry. Capital investment for building materials was greatly increased in 1941 as compared with 1940. In Azerbaijan

the increase represented something like 122 per cent., in Georgia 101 per cent.

Now how did these figures translate into reality ? At the risk of letting this passage read like a builder's catalogue, here are a few more facts. In the whole territory of Azerbaijan there were only two theatres before the Revolution. Now there are twenty-six. There are 1633 completely new club buildings as well as 518 cinemas. This cinema figure does not include open air performances given high up in the mountains by travelling projectors, of course.

The old town has certainly retreated in Baku. The main streets have been widened, asphalted ; port facilities have been modernized. But more important is the garden city with blocks of buildings that even Socialist Vienna might envy. (The Caucasus is a land of flowers. But here the climate permits them to beautify not only the living-room but the street and the promenade as well.)

Tiflis is of greater antiquity than Baku. Baku is the future model metropolis, not jazzy and garish, but with all the dignity of labour—a city, perhaps, which will be famous in the greater industrial age of the future. In Tiflis the familiar donkey has grown bicycle wheels. He still plods in the old town, hard by the fortress. Tiflis and Rustaveli are one. The great poet looks down from his pedestal in the beautiful new avenue that bears his name. To-day, no doubt, new heroes are being remembered : Georgian pilots and tank-drivers and workers in the rich Chiaturi manganese mines. Their names will be perpetuated on stone, but even they will not crowd out

Rustaveli. He sang of bravery and freedom, and his songs are a monument to the heroes of the present and the future.

Erivan of tumbledown memory, the sad capital of the persecuted Armenians, has much of its head still in construction scaffolds. But its new buildings and its new industries have given it an important place both in the cultural and economic life of the Soviet Union.

PUBLIC HEALTH

Malaria in the low marshlands of the Black Sea, pneumonia in the mountains, leprosy in Azerbaijan and Armenia, scurvy, smallpox and typhus almost everywhere in the Caucasus—this was the conclusion of British observers before the last Great War. "The science of hygiene is unknown in the Caucasian villages, and medical aid is absent or inaccessible in country districts." (*Caucasia*, 1920, an official handbook prepared for the British Foreign Office, p. 17.) Except for a few Russian doctors in the principal towns of Azerbaijan—to take a specific area—and something like twenty-one hospitals, very little in the way of medical service reached the mass of the people in the rural districts.

The situation has been completely revolutionized by the widespread system of nurseries, mothers' clinics, and small hospitals. The number of hospitals in Azerbaijan, for example, grew from 21 to 222 in 1940.

The problem of malaria was, of course, bound up with the reclamation of marshlands and the laying down of proper water-supplies, especially in the Batum district. The figures of malaria-infected persons stood in the region

of 216 per 10,000 in 1913; in 1929 this figure was reduced to 118 per 10,000, and in recent years this second figure has been considerably reduced, although, of course, malarial infection changes from year to year, on account of sudden climatic vagaries, for example.

Goitre and epilepsy cases were frequent among the Svanetians. Surgical aid was well nigh impossible. But by means of flying squads of doctors and nurses, not to mention the improvement in methods of transport, medical aid can be rushed to the most inaccessible places.

Odd cures, such as the rather expensive process of grinding down diamonds to rid oneself of a stomach-ache, have disappeared. The ***hakims***, the local 'doctors,' have gone entirely out of business or are studying the more effective sciences. Diseases were frequently considered to be malignant spirits, feminine and masculine. Smallpox, for example, was a feminine malady, and the ***hakim*** advised his patient to propitiate the disease with flowers and sweetmeats. For the masculine disease, such as leprosy, spiced wine was offered in the hope that the leprosy-spirit might depart contented. Nevertheless, the old medical lore did occasionally stumble across a remedy. I was once cured of dysentery with a brew of pomegranate skins, as bitter a tasting potion as ever came out of a dispensary. There were even medical properties in the popular food of the people, such as ***dolma***, a dish of mixed rice and meat balls wrapped in vine leaves. Scientists of the Azerbaijan Tropical Institute have managed to extract the vitamin C from vine leaves and are using it to combat cases of scurvy.

Modern scientists have also been experimenting with the napthalin cure for leprosy. Specially processed napthalin oil, which is extracted at the health resort of Napthalan, in Azerbaijan, is injected under the skin of a leprous patient. Excellent results have been achieved not only in early cases, but in reducing the terrible condition of chronic leprosy as well.

DRINK YOUR WAY TO HEALTH

No temperance society could object to the mineral waters of the Caucasus. They make you happy in a different way.

Even the ancient Romans scorned the beauties of the Mediterranean to put their winter colonies on the Black Sea coast, so as to be near to the healing waters. "Nunc est bibendum" may not have sounded so pleasant to a goblet of sulphurous or carbonized water, but it did the Romans' gout good.

The mineral waters and spas of the Caucasus are renowned throughout the Soviet Union. The waters of Borjom, for example, are sold almost in every kiosk. Why, before the last Great War, they even threatened to supplant Vichy. (The business was so lucrative that it was given to one of the Russian Grand Dukes to help him to spend a happy time in Monte Carlo, no doubt.)

Nature, perhaps, in its rough compensating way intended the mineral spas to be used by the people; with one hand it plagued them with numerous diseases, and with the other it offered them a cure. But the treatment was hopelessly out of reach of the poor. Places like

Piatigorsk and Kislovodsk were famous spas, mostly run by fashionable German specialists.

Many of the springs occur in the health resorts of the Black Sea coast. Until the war something like 67,000 miners and their families used to take their annual holidays in the resorts of Sochi and Novy Afon. They and thousands of other people from the towns in the vast interior of Russia were sent at the expense of the State Social Insurance Fund. Special holiday funds are also provided by the Trade Unions Many of the Trade Unions have their own establishments—such as the Leningrad Workers, Agricultural Workers, and the Heavy Industries—set in surroundings that matched the Sierras of California and the Alps of Switzerland.

Most waters are mineral in the sense that salts and other chemical substances of various kinds are dissolved in them. But the special rock-formations of the Caucasus—the hot molten lava which exists in the deepest parts of the earth's crust, through which the water filters—have qualities that help to cure such diverse ailments as wounds, rheumatism, gout, heart and digestive derangements.

There are more than five hundred places in the Caucasus where gushing mineral springs are to be found. Around Piatigorsk, in a radius of about forty miles, lie more than a hundred of these springs.

But many mineral springs are used for bathing as well as drinking purposes. Also the thermal mud at Essentuki is electrically heated and is greatly valued as a remedy against skin diseases.

Naturally, many of these waters are said to have mythological origins. Wandering bards and singers have claimed through countless songs and fables that the Narzan waters, for which Kislovodsk is famous, are the very elixir of strength and beauty. They tell how in the days when mountains moved as men Elbruz, the proud 13,000-foot giant of the Caucasus, loved the graceful little mountain Mashuk. (Not so little. It takes almost a whole day to climb to the top of it.) But it appears that Tau, another mountain, was also interested in the lady. Mashuk, with a fickleness that singers never fail to compare with the eternal feminine heart, promised her hand in marriage to both her lovers.

Jealousy raged in the granite hearts of the two simpletons. Elbruz and Tau met in fierce combat and fought for countless centuries while the lady Mashuk urged them on, saying that she would be the prize for the victor. And Elbruz, summoning all his strength at last, tore the boulders from his bosom and threw them at cousin Tau, splitting him into five pieces. And, says the singer, that is why the name of Tau is to-day Bech-Tau—'bech' meaning five in the mountain language.

But when Elbruz turned to claim the sweets of victory he beheld the peerless Mashuk, and she was as wrinkled and moss-covered as a pile of old apples. And to add to his sorrows Elbruz discovered that Tau had wounded him grievously. The life-blood of Elbruz flowed from his riven side and mixed with the tears of poor Mashuk.

These are the waters of Narzan. He who bathes in them can choose whether he would be cured of love for

ever or attain eternal strength and beauty. (Some one promptly asks the old singer why he hasn't bathed in the waters of Narzan.)

But the singer does not know how near his story is to the medical truth. The waters of Narzan may not be able to cure the pangs of love, but they certainly are a wonderful specific for heart disease.

Chapter VIII

IMAGINATION

If the Caucasus stirred the imagination of the ancient world, with its panorama of blue mountains and fiercely bright sunsets, how much more has its beauty and its awe entered into the soul of the people which inhabit it. The shepherd on some lonely slope heard the cannon-voice of heaven and felt near to the gods ; the man in the valley turned his thoughts to the music of a mountain brook ; the sad and the oppressed envied the free flight of the eagle. Whole centuries of anonymous artists strove to capture the moments of twilight, the silence of the mountains and the snows, and the vivid parquetry of the valleys strewn with flowers They limned their feelings in the faded frescoes of monasteries and churches. They created dances, vigorous and exotic, soft lullabies and songs that sobbed for lost freedoms. And in the marketplace they sold their produce with the salty wisdom of a proverb.

THE LIBRARIES OF THE MIND

The beautiful and profound works of the Armenians and Georgians belong to the literary symposium of civilization. They were fortunate to possess a script with which to record their impressions on durable stuff. But what of those many nations in the Caucasus who wrote on the thin tablets of memory ? They had no alphabet.

What they thought they spoke, hoping by means of speech to excite the memory to preserve the wisdom of the sages. There was little room in such libraries of the mind for second-rate ideas or literary rehash. Possessing no written language, they were compelled to remember only the worth-while.

The tragedy, however, is that while much is preserved in the repertoire of mountain bards and story-tellers, much too has been lost. For the mind is a frail instrument, and many a peerless song must have passed with the death of its originator or originators. Such folk-literature was inevitably dependent on the individual whim of the old and envious, who may have held in their mean heart the treasures of a thousand years, and yet preferred, like misers, to go to the grave with their gold.

To-day much of the rich folk-literature of the Caucasus has been collected. The work of the Marr Institute, of countless archaeologists, historians, and philologists, has rescued much from the very edge of oblivion. What whoops of academic joy must have greeted the discovery of an old mountain bard who produced out of the rubble of many songs and fairy-tales an unknown saga of some ten thousand verses, remembered by him alone!

THE LOVERS

In the Caucasus, the word *ashug*, or bard, also means lover. The man of songs is more than a perambulating library or storehouse of after-dinner tales. The great

Georgian poet Rustaveli said, "Minstrelsy is first of all a branch of wisdom."

The old Karbardino-Balkarian *ashug* tells his tale to the accompaniment of bagpipes and a strange little castanet-like instrument that beats out the metre. The *ashugs* are renowned for their improvising skill A theme may be suggested to an *ashug* by the audience, and after he has drained a goblet of proffered wine the speech of Homer flows from him in easy cadences. Should he stumble, the listeners themselves supply a line or a verse. The times have changed, and the *ashugs* and their audiences have added to their repertoire of themes the tractor and the aeroplane. The bandit of the hills, even the redoubtable Shamyl—they have yielded pride of place to the new heroes of labour, to the men who perform prodigious deeds in the workshops and collective farms, to the Polar fliers. And songs to Stalin, the father and friend of the peoples—him the *ashug* lyres never cease to laud. His revolutionary exploits, his friendliness and simplicity of heart—these things have earned him a place in the eternal sagas of the mountains.

Here are a few lines from an Armenian poem, called *The Electric Light in the Village*. It was composed by a forty-five-year-old collective farmer. "The day of lament is over," he says. "The collective farm has brought life to the dreams of the poor. Gone are the smoky lamps, and our hearts unfold like the petals of a rose."

Contests between versifiers are popular. In the old days things went ill with the hack who took to himself the name of poet. The audience, if they considered his efforts atrocious, invited a successful rival to smite off

his head! But this excellent method of keeping the standard of poetry high has been abandoned for less drastic means of literary criticism.

POEMS IN ONE LINE

The proverb is the poetry of the common people. These one-line verses of anonymous authorship have mocked the tyrant through all the ages. They have inspired the brave and encouraged the waverer. The piquant little proverb, "If wives were good God himself would have one," undoubtedly shows trace of Moslem humour.

"The laugh of the rose makes the nightingale lose its head," say the Georgians.

In the opinion of the Armenians, "every man has in his heart a lion that sleeps."

They also say, "When a snake is about to die it lies down in the middle of the road." (Evil, even in its last spasm, will place itself in a position to do the maximum harm.)

"If the nose was not between the eyes they would eat each other."

"He who does not seek friends is his own enemy."

"It is better to drink water from a small spring than salty water from an ocean."

"One blames one's friend to his face and one's enemy to his back."

"He who loses Monday loses all the week."

"What is lost by laughing is not found again by crying."

"The donkey can swim in seven different ways. But as soon as he sees water he forgets them all."

POETRY IN METAL, WOOL, AND PERFUME

The metal-work of the small Kubachi people rivals the greatest creations of the Arab Damascene sword-masters. In their legends they claim that they made armour and weapons for the Romans. The famous Macedonian phalanx of Alexander the Great had finely chased shields provided by the Kubachi. But not a word will they say of their remarkable skill in forging the crown coinage of the Tsars. Having no economic outlet for their skill, except, perhaps, to produce cheap and attractive gewgaws, they also turned to forgeries of antique armour. These reproductions were so good, I am told, that even experts acknowledged them as genuine. To-day, however, they have their hands full in supplying museums with examples of their skill; especially prized is their niello-work (the inlaying of gold and other metals on steel and ivory). They also make exquisite articles of personal wear, such as the ornamental belts which go with the national costume—the Cherkesska War has turned their skilful fingers to the practical art of forging the weapons of modern combat.

What of the carpet-makers of the Caucasus? Theirs is the poetry of colour—a carpet full of ancient patterns with the irregularities and sudden bursts of inspiration which no machine-loom can possibly copy. Scientists maintain that mineral dyes are just as good or even better than the home-made recipes of the carpet-makers. But I for one cannot think of a better red than that which

crushed grapes give. I like the deep colour of wine better than its brother, however skilfully contrived in the test-tube. I am pleased with the idea that the "kirmiz" (the juice of the cochineal beetle) is diluted down to violet with nothing less extravagant than milk. I am unrepentantly romantic enough to hope that the humble carpet-maker will one day play his part in the ennoblement of civilization, not only in the halls of kings and the rich but in the palaces of the people.

Perhaps the quaintest (and, for all I know, by now extinct craftsman) is the master of fragrance. He was a subtle alchemist who scented not only the bodies of women but manuscripts and books as well. How pleasant (or unpleasant) it must have been to pick up a book of poems and, without opening its pages, to know its contents immediately by its scent.

For each book the alchemist was sure to give a different aroma. Many weeks he would spend reading and studying, mixing his fumes according to his reactions. What sort of a stench, O Master of Fragrance, would you bestow on the ravings of ***Mein Kampf***?

SIGNED "SOSELO"

In the year 1895 a poem appeared in the newspaper ***Iberia***. It reed:

Whose back was bent with toil unending,
Who knelt but yesterday in thrall,
Will rise, I say, the mountain's envy,
On wings of hope, high over all.

Yaroslavsky, one of the heads of the Soviet Bureau of Information, in his biography ***Landmarks in the Life of***

Stalin, reveals the identity of the sixteen-year-old author of this poem, who signed himself "Soselo."

"His love of poetry is shown by the little-known fact that he wrote quite good verses himself," says Yaroslavsky. ". . . Much of Stalin's youthful verses were appreciated by progressive Georgian intellectuals, and one of his poems was included in a jubilee anthology dedicated to the Georgian writer, Rafail Eristavi."

Stalin himself has never referred to the verses of his youth. Unlike Hitler with his water-colours, he probably does not consider them of any lasting artistic merit. They would be worth while collecting, however, for they would throw an interesting light on his personality.

INTRODUCING SHAKESPEARE

When the dam of darkness was broken the tremendous creative energies of persecuted, alphabet-blind, and native populations poured like a flood through the turbines of the printing house, and generated millions of books, newspapers, and magazines—electric, new, and exciting. The State Publishing House of the small Adjarian Republic has printed something like half a million volumes in the last five years. In the far larger republic of Azerbaijan roughly eight million books were printed in the one year 1938.

But how do these figures translate into literature? Books are often one thing, and literature quite another. The ability to read does not of itself create discriminating taste. Yet a glance at the cover reveals an authorship which should satisfy the most fastidious. The works of Cervantes and Shakespeare, of Shaw and

Thomas Mann, Wells and Victor Hugo, Whitman and Dreiser—not to mention the great Russians like Pushkin, Tolstoy, and Gorki—to name but a few, are no longer the preserve of a limited intelligentzia.

This is a revolutionary event which has given new values not only to the reading public but to many young contemporary writers. Moreover, as a result of skilful translations many nationalities of the Soviet Union have been able to broaden their own cultural rivers by the intake of literature which was once completely foreign to them. They have come to celebrate the anniversaries of Shakespeare, Rustaveli, and the Ukrainian Taras Shevchenko as if they were a part of their own literary heritage.

I sincerely think that this mixing of cultures has provided one of the strongest links which bind the Soviet people together and provokes them to such epic deeds of heroism against the narrow, racialist-ridden creed of Nazi-ism. It is difficult, perhaps, for more sophisticated nations, whose forefathers fought for and won freedom of the Press, to realize what it means to countless folk to be able to read the works of their ancient and contemporary authors in their own language, and to share in the literary glories of other nations.

IN BYRON'S OPINION

Byron, although by no means an authority on the Armenian language, made an attempt to study it during his stay in Venice from 1816 to 1817. There was an Armenian monastery in the vicinity, and he spent many hours looking through the manuscripts of its library. "I

can confidently assure you," he wrote at a later date to a friend, "that the Armenians have books and manuscripts that are quite remarkable, particularly translations of many Greek works, the originals of which are now lost."

Russian and Armenian scholars have for a number of years past carried out research in old monastic archives and have expressed hopes of finding lost portions of Homer's *Iliad*. But Byron's remarks on Armenian literature testify to its antiquity, and there can be no doubt that Greece left its mark upon it. Byzantium too, where Leo the Armenian was emperor, bestowed its rich legacy.

But Armenian literature was comparatively unknown outside a group of philologists who were often enough of too scientific a mind to appreciate its beauties. Indeed, it was the Russian Valeri Bryusov who in 1916 collected and published at his own expense an anthology of Armenian poetry. In his opinion Armenian poetry is "oriental in its language, western in its wisdom, full of grief without despair, full of passion without frenzy, and rapture that knows its limits."

The thousandth anniversary of the Armenian epic *David of Sasun* was celebrated in 1939. It was dramatized and staged by the Erivan Theatre, and was received with great enthusiasm. Despite many topical themes, Armenian writers have drawn heavily on the past for their creations.

Although he remains true to traditional forms, Avantik Isaakyan is considered to be the greatest of all contem-

porary Armenian poets. He returned to Soviet Armenia after twenty-five years' exile where he was driven by the all too familiar turmoils of Armenia's misfortunes. Blok, the eminent Russian contemporary of Isaakyan, now dead, did much to bring the Armenian poet's work to the attention of Russian readers. Appraising his quality, Blok considered that ' probably you will not find in all Europe to-day such a brilliant and spontaneous talent." This was written some twenty-five years ago. But there can be no doubt that Isaakyan has won for himself a permanent place in Armenian literature.

He is by no means the only luminary in contemporary Armenian literature, however. There is the seventy-five-year-old Akop Akopyan, who was long rejected by intellectual circles for his stirring, simple, but inspiring verses.

Isaakyan, better than most Armenian writers, was as a result of his exile able to judge the progress made by Armenian literature. He himself says how the frantic struggle for elementary freedom and economic justice has turned the vision of younger Armenian poets to celebrate not only the heroic episodes of the past but the equally heroic endeavours of the present. Moreover, he is particularly delighted to see that prose is beginning to share the field of literature, a monopoly which poetry, by reason, no doubt, of its greater memorability, has for so long enjoyed in Armenia and the East generally.

It does not lie in the scope of this book, and, indeed, the author is not competent because of the ignorance of Georgian and Armenian, to make a critical appraisal of works which have been available to him only in Russian

translation. Nevertheless, the words of the Armenian poet Nalbandyan (1829-66) have a particular appropriateness and deserve to be quoted :

But I to open spaces shall repair,
My lyre and flow'ry speeches cast away.
My voice in rage indignant loudly raise,
'Gainst darkness to engage myself prepare.

Oh, warrior ! Now's no time to pluck the lyre.
Thy deadly sword unsheathe and firmly grasp !
The foe exterminate in blood and fire,
This is our battle cry and life's stern task !

A SCOTSMAN IN THE CAUCASUS

Lermontov, the "Russian Byron," never forgot his Scottish descent, which dated back to the early seventeenth century, when one of his soldier ancestors entered the service of the Tsars. As a child, he dreamed of the palatial halls of some abandoned castle set in the Highlands of "my beloved Scotland." Sick and ailing, he had been taken to the Caucasus as a child to recover his health. The impression he had of the mountains he was never to forget. Indeed, in one of his poems he wrote, "To remember the Caucasus for ever, you have only to go there once." For him the Caucasus was the "Prince of the Earth." Later when he returned, exiled by the Autocrat of All the Russias for the vitriolic poem he wrote on the death of his friend, Pushkin, he came to reinforce his childish impressions and to pour out lyrics and epics which have earned him an immortal place in Russian literature.

Although he fought against the mountaineers and their liberty, he made no effort to disguise in his poems

where his real sympathies lay. Fight he had to, for that was a condition of his exile. He had been stifled by censorship, persecuted by petty regulations, so that the liberty which he envisaged in the distant glens of Scotland stirred in him profound love for the freedom-loving Caucasians.

He poured out his disenchantment more exquisitely than Byron in his ***Prisoner of Chillon.*** How often must he have muttered Byron's words to the Tsar and his armies that with the slaughter of the mountaineers "their country conquers with their martyrdom." The breath of defiance sweeps through his ***Prisoner of the Caucasus,*** and through his lyrics, like ***Kinjal—The Dagger***—which, he said, "the pensive Georgian forged for vengeance and the free Cherkess sharpened for frightful carnage."

Lermontov died at the early age of twenty-six. Like Pushkin, he was carried off by a senseless duel. But he died in the sight of the mountains that he loved so well. Generous to the last, he aimed high in the air, and his bullet ricochetted in a tree. But even as the leaves began to fall his thoughtless opponent fired point-blank at the poet, winning for himself the impotent rage of future generations for slaying not the man he had quarrelled with in a drunken brawl, but a genius who, after Pushkin, is Russia's best.

Lermontov's poems have been translated into many languages of the Caucasus. His memorial in Piatigorsk and the grotto a little outside the town in which Lermontov rested and wrote many of his verses have become a shrine to which thousands of visitors come to pay tribute to his memory.

DANCING

I like to think that dancing came before speech in the hills. The mime of flowers, eagles, and waterfalls, not to speak of human passions, the love of women, the relish of wine, and hatred, the anguish of parting—all these and many other themes have been woven into the fabric of a thousand dances, dances created in the dimness of time, dances almost sacerdotal, as formal as classical ballet in their number of prescribed steps.

Think not, balletomanes, that your primas and your ballerinas were the first to dance *sur les pointes*. The Georgian Lesghinka was danced on tiptoe many centuries before the choreographers of France and St Petersburg made the innovation in the eighteenth century.

Dancing is a part of every one's life, both in the highlands and lowlands, among women and men. Foxtrots and quicksteps have, of course, invaded the open-air dance-halls of the resorts and the Workers' Clubs, but if the ear hears the jazz quicken it seems as if, despite itself, the traditional *motif* is introduced into their version of swing.

But the Lesghinka is a subtle dance. It is the dance of love, and only lovers can dance it to perfection. The variety hall and the theatre can never reproduce the real thing. There is no cloy nor pseudo-sentiment in the Lesghinka, for love has not been measured in the length of a Hollywood kiss in the Caucasus. The tempo is light-hearted. With each step of the dancer's feet there comes a sound like the falling of faint rain. He crosses the palm of his right hand behind his head and

veers in a circle. The skirt of the Cherkesska flares from his waist like a turtledove's fan. Then the woman enters the weaving circle, and the erotic, provocative play of love is depicted in every glance of the eyes and gesture of the hands.

Of all the manifold variety of dances in the Caucasus the warrior dance of Daghestan is, perhaps, the most replete with mountain voodoo. The high *staccato* notes of flute and bagpipe are expressed by a long line of dancers who, with arms knit, move with the loose joints of a snake. They advance and they retreat in perfect time with slow, sliding steps. Then suddenly the leader stumbles; hit by an imaginary bullet, he clasps his breast. He shuffles weakly as his henchmen carry him off in his arms. A familiar charade this on an all too familiar occurrence in the turbulent hills of yesterday. Description defeats itself. Only the eyes can capture the fluid movement of feet encased in the milk-soft boots swishing away into a silence as still as death.

Or the Dagger Dance. The dancer, bristling with *kinjals*, concealed in the most unexpected places—behind his head, in his sleeves, in his boot—throws them with astonishing rapidity and accuracy until the floor at his feet quivers like a carpet of steel. To see this dance is to know that the dagger was once the apotheosis of vengeance, bitter to the faithless lover and the treacherous friend. It is no dance for the novice. It is out of place in the night clubs and music-halls. It needs the granite of the mountains for a backcloth, not lipstick and champagne.

(*A propos* bagpipes, Scotsmen, do not think that you

are the sole possessors of this howling instrument; the mountaineers of the Caucasus can make an equal din with inflated bladders that fill the air like the wail of little Calibans.)

BOUQUET TO VICTORY

Soon bombers may be flying over the vineyards and the gardens of the Caucasus, and the camellia and heavy-scented magnolia will be startled by the sound of gun-fire.

This first of May Moscow abandoned its festoons and baskets of Caucasus and Crimean flowers. The flowers of the warm south—the lilies of the valley, the azaleas, the rich roses that begin to bloom as early as January—have gone unplucked. Only the children have been gathering bunches of mountain flowers to place them near the bedside of some convalescing Red Army man.

But the grape harvest will have to be picked as it has since immemorial times The ancients acclaimed the wines of Colchis as the brew of the gods. They planted many of the vine-shoots of the Caucasus on the soil of Greece British airmen and, no doubt, the non-teetotallers of the British and American missions who have been to the Soviet Union have drunk many a toast in the wines of the Caucasus. I wonder if they found them any the less palatable than the French or Italian.

The Khevsurs are the only people who drink beer on any large scale in the Caucasus. This attachment to beer is, no doubt, a relic of pagan or religious significance. The beer was rewarded as holy, and consequently it was considered the height of piety to get tipsy on

it. Could a brewer have a better sales slogan than this: "Be holy—drink more beer !" ?

The plague of vodka-drinking, that 'poor man's ruin' of Tsarist Russia on which the rickety state battened, was never such a severe problem in the Caucasus as in other parts of Russia. Throughout the south generally wine, mostly home-made, was the common beverage. Heavy drinking of the sort that sends people under the table is rarely to be found. The force of public opinion has been strong against intoxicants of all kinds, especially of the heavy variety. But light table wines, such as the rich Kakhetian, are popular throughout the country. The champagne of Abrau-Dursan is in every way as good as the French, and the wine of Alazan has a unique fragrance and mellowness.

The grapes that go to make the champagne in which the toast of final victory will be drunk have already been pressed. Who cares if the victory vintage will be the year 1942 ?

Chapter IX

THE MILLIONAIRES

There are millionaires in the Soviet Caucasus. But, like all success stories, this one must be told in contrast.

In Tsarist Russia there were twelve million wooden ploughs and forty million wooden threshing flails. This method of agriculture was as primitive as it had been in the days of the Egyptian Ptolemys.

With few exceptions, what applied to Russia applied also to the Caucasus. Only here the lot of the peasant was, perhaps, even worse. The best land belonged either to the crown or was divided up into estates of the Georgian nobility and the Church, and after them came the smaller holdings of Armenian and Tartar kulak (wealthy) farmers.

In the North Caucasus the wages of agricultural labourers were generally higher than in either Transcaucasia or Russia. They received something between 1*s*. 7*d*. and 2*s*. 2*d*. per day. Female labour was fortunate to get three-quarters of this sum. This dreary list belongs to history.

On the farms of the nobility and the rich farmers specially imported agricultural machinery was generally used. The landlords were anxious to increase their harvest per acre so as to export it beyond the seas. Money was, after all, needed in the watering-places of Europe in the casinos of the Riviera.

PRINCIPAL AGRICULTURAL AND MINERAL AREAS.

(This map shows only the principal agricultural and mineral areas. There are many other but less important workings.)

But the individual peasant with his small eleven-acre farm (if he was lucky) or, as in the Caucasus, an even smaller plot of parched earth had to content himself with the wooden plough, a picturesque enough implement, it is true, but one which could dig but lightly into the soil. The seed he held in a bag slung round his waist. He threw it out by hand, and when the hot summer came the young plants perished for lack of moisture. If he had a horse the plough bit more deeply into the earth. But few of the peasants had horses in the Caucasus. Their wives and daughters were sometimes leashed to the plough. What could he do? It was not a matter for sentiment but survival.

Then in other parts of the Caucasus nomads drove their herds from place to place seeking fodder. The land they covered was fertile, but it needed water. Careful irrigation could turn the waste land into cotton fields. Moscow cotton manufacturers were importing as much as one hundred million roubles-worth of cotton from abroad. They paid out capital to encourage cotton-growing in Azerbaijan. But the prices they paid to the farmers often compelled them to grow cereals again, food which they could eat.

Take another example: tea. In pre-revolutionary days there were about 2020 acres under tea along the Black Sea coast in the Province of Batum. Of these acres 1080 belonged to the Crown. But little was done to drain the marshlands and push back heavily overgrown forests. The Russian Empire preferred to import sixty-two million roubles'-worth of tea each year. Now more than

108,680 acres in Adjaria and Azerbaijan are covered by tea plantations.

THE COLLECTIVE FARM

Some years ago an old woman of sixty announced to an astonished Press-man when he interviewed her on a collective farm that she was five years old! Urged to explain this phenomenon, she said simply: "I do not count the years I lived before I came to the collective farm." Was it surprising that she was willing to throw away, to forget, fifty-five years of her life when around her grew a new civilization of neat houses, a hospital, a theatre, shops, a school, and a library?

The collective farm has become a rich, almost self-contained world for millions of landless and exploited peasants. It did not come overnight. It did not come without a struggle. Prejudice and tradition allied themselves to small-scale farming. The old life may have prematurely aged and prematurely killed, but it did seem a means of going to the dogs in your own way. Earth was a vale of tears and travail. Heaven would reward the right, etc.

The agricultural revolution came to the Caucasus, as to other parts of the Soviet Union, in the form of State Farms (Sovkozes) and Collective Farms (Kolkhozes). The State farm undoubtedly showed the way to greater prosperity. But there were comparatively few of them in the Caucasus. For example, even to-day, only 2·5 per cent. of all the tea and tobacco farms are State farms. The rest are collective farms.

In the North Caucasus there were great grain farms, but in the Transcaucasus maize was the only major grain

crop. To-day the more valuable cotton, tea, and tobacco have taken the place of maize, and there is intensive breeding of hogs, sheep, and cattle.

The State farm is much larger in size than the collective. It used to be fashionable for these farms to take on gigantic proportions—it was a period of gigantic ideas in Soviet agriculture as well as industry. One farm, for example, in 1931 was something like 625,000 acres in size. They say that it took the director six days to traverse it from end to end. But to-day the average size of a State grain farm is more like 58,000 acres.

The gross output of these farms varies considerably with the undertaking. The Stalin State Farm on the Kuban at Krasnodar, in the North Caucasus, runs not only cornfields and vineyards, vegetable gardens, orchards, and livestock, but has a number of other flourishing concerns such as a spirit distillery, cattle-fattening station, flour mill, and a biscuit factory. Its gross output is ten million roubles.

Now these State farms proved a great boon to collective farmers in the early years of development. They helped in the general organization, they provided tractors, combines, motor-trucks, and seeds on loan; they trained skilled workers. But they did something more: they excited the curiosity of the individual farmer. Open-mouthed, they saw that the new technique actually worked and, what is more, produced better harvests. They were amazed at the new buildings, the libraries, the community halls, electricity, and mechanical equipment. Moreover, they found (in 1932) that the average yearly wage of a State grain worker was something like 1200 roubles, far

more cash than the individual farmer had probably seen for years. Another surprise awaited the sceptical: the farm workers had their own cows and poultry; kitchen-gardens and necessary implements had been provided for them, and they were wearing good clothes and shoes, and spending their leisure time in amateur dramatics, singing, and dancing—as if they had no care in the world.

But, despite all this, the collective farm movement spread very gradually in the Caucasus. The change-over, however, when it came, came rapidly, so that in Georgia to-day 94 per cent. of all peasant households are united in collective farms. In the Adjar Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic there are 312 collective farms, or 97·6 per cent. of the total of all holdings.

The average income of the Georgian collective farms exceeded 600 million roubles in 1940. In the far smaller Republic of Armenia the percentage of collective farms is about the same as in Georgia, with a total income of 263 million roubles, according to 1939 figures.

The collective farm is not a State enterprise. It is an organization of individual peasants united in co-operative farming of their land. The collective farm belongs to its workers in perpetuity. They cannot, of course, sell their holdings.

Agricultural and industrial development is planned in the Soviet Union by Gosplan—the State Planning Commission. Blue-prints are drawn up for every five years, which are, in turn, divided into smaller periods. The various constituent republics, which, of course, have a say in the drawing up of the plan itself, then apportion parts of the plan allotted to them and give it out to the

Autonomous Republics and Provinces, Districts and Collective Farms comprising their territory.

The quota apportioned to the collective farm is usually discussed and thoroughly investigated by its members. Various suggestions and amendments are put forward and the plan is either modified or, as it happens frequently, even increased in scope.

The collective farm elects its own Soviet or board. The board in turn elects its director, his deputy, and secretary. Their jobs are often full-time, but that largely depends on the size of the collective farm itself. All major decisions are made at a general meeting of the members of the Kolkhoz. Cultural committees, committees attending to sanitary and hygienic matters, librarians, and other officers are also elected by the general assembly.

The farmers themselves are divided into brigades. By this means, labour is rationalized, and specialists are trained. After a certain period has elapsed the brigades interchange their duties, so that each individual farmer has a thorough all-round knowledge of the farm's work.

The collective farm does not pay a fixed wage. When various State deductions are made, and payments (in kind, not money) are completed for the hire of tractors and arrangements made for seed reserves, fodder, etc., a further 2 per cent. of the collective farm income is put aside for various cultural activities, club, creche, and training dues; then the rest of the income is apportioned among the collective farmers both in cash and in kind (wheat, potatoes, vegetable produce, etc.) Collective farmers can and do receive some of their ' profits ' before the yearly accounts are made.

The apportioning of communal profits is done in a very interesting way, one which is scrupulously fair and takes into account not only the amount of work done, but the quality of that work. The assessment is based on what is known as the "Labour Day Unit." Thus there is a fixed amount of cotton-picking which has to be done in order to earn one Labour Day Unit; or, to give a more simple example, taken from dairy-farming: for every 100 litres of milk obtained by a dairy-maid, $1\frac{1}{2}$ Labour Day Units are assessed to her. Every consideration is, of course, given to the milking propensities of a particular herd If they are known to be poor milkers, the assessment may not be based on a 100 litres but on 90 or 80 litres. The same obtains in ploughing or the extraction of sugar-beet or threshing.

It is possible by this means for Stakhanovite workers, that is to say, people who have improved on their methods of work, to increase their output and so earn a greater number of Labour Day Units than a man less skilled. The blackboard on which the efforts of brigades and individual workers are depicted in large chalk figures certainly helps to make the slackers feel ashamed of themselves as it encourages the others to still greater activity. A brigade that fails to produce its quota as a result of bad work and not of conditions beyond its control can find that as much as a 10 per cent. deduction is made of the total number of units from each individual member. A blow to prestige and pocket.

It was inevitable that some form of labour discipline should be established on collective farms, and, indeed, the majority of industrious collective farmers welcomed

the Government decree which made it obligatory to perform a minimum of a hundred work-days per annum. In districts of lesser productivity outside of the Black Earth areas and in mountainous districts where the yield is less than in the lowlands the compulsory minimum is sixty days. In other districts the minimum is eighty days.

In Armenia last year there were forty millionaire collective farms—that is to say, each one of them showed a profit of a million roubles. To show specifically how such profits are divided among the collective farmers: the millionaire Voroshilov Collective Farm in Adjaria paid out 16 roubles 50 kopeks in cash for every working day earned by its members. This roughly represents an annual gross income of 20,000 roubles earned by each collective farm family that is to say—the collective farmer and his wife and any children who may have been engaged on agricultural work. This Voroshilov Farm is by no means an exception, and indubitably demonstrates the benefit to be derived from co-operative farming. Added to the cash receipt is the produce received in kind. In the case of a tea plantation, of course, the collective farmer and his family only need a very small proportion of the produce for their own domestic purposes. The rest they dispose of to the *artel*, or Consumers' Co-operative. But where the collective farmer receives, say, four or five tons of potatoes as part of his share, he can dispose of them either by selling them to the Government or to neighbours or on the open market or any way he pleases.

Every collective farmer can, if he chooses, possess, a plot of ground which varies from half an acre to 1½ acres

and in some districts to as much as 2½ acres (according to whether it is irrigated or unirrigated land). This ground is for his own personal use. He is entitled to keep anything from two to five cows, twenty to forty sheep, from two to three pigs, and an unlimited number of poultry. The produce from this small-holding he can turn into ready money in any way he chooses. Of course, the work he does on the collective farm earns him a far larger income than that which he can get from his own small holding. By this means individual whims can be satisfied. One man can grow celery or tomatoes, and another cabbages if he pleases, or all of them, for his own domestic needs.

As a result of all these arrangements thousands of collective farmers in the Caucasus have received incomes which even the rich peasants and landowners of former days would well have envied. They know no insecurity. They know that everything they grow they can sell. And the more they can grow the better, for the demand is for ever increasing.

Agriculture, from being one of the worst paid occupations, has become one of the best paid. Your farm labourer is encouraged to have his own house (28,000 collective farmers in Azerbaijan have their own newly built, modern cottages). He can call on the services of trained medical personnel. There are creches and schools for his children. There are bath-houses and barbers' shops. Many collective farms have their own cinemas and theatres. For others, not so well provided, there are touring projector cars. Agronomists and skilled mechanical workers and engineers in the motor-tractor stations are there to help

him. His children can graduafe in universities, and he himself can keep abreast of the times with radio, newspapers, and lectures.

Lipstick and fashionable dresses are no longer the monopoly of the city girl. The patriarchs, undoubtedly, shake their heads; but they have learned to twist the knobs of the wireless-set fiercely and enjoy telling their grandchildren of the bad old days in which, inevitably, they were heroes, fighting the oppressive measures directed against their tongues and their cultures.

ORANGES AND LEMONS

Oranges, lemons, grapefruit, bamboo, cork-trees, palms, eucalyptus—all these grow in the open-air hothouse between Batum and Sukhum. Western Georgia, with its rainfall of 80" to 60" per annum, is a sub-tropical garden—a Soviet Florida.

Yet before the Revolution 95 per cent. of the best arable land, or 670,000 acres, of this area were devoted to one crop and one crop only—maize. As in Italy today, maize was the staple food of the people in most parts of the Caucasus. Those who have tasted Italian *polenta* know how it fills out the stomach, allaying only temporarily the feeling of hunger without giving the body any real nourishment.

Many other areas in the Soviet Union are capable of producing maize (although this food has more and more gone to feed poultry rather than human beings). The soil and the climate of the sub-tropical Caucasus have been put to a better service. Cultivation of tea, as we have seen, has risen from a few acres to many thousands. Although Adjaria (incorporated in the Georgian

S.S.R.) is the smallest Autonomous Republic in the Soviet Union, she produces nearly the whole of the tea harvest in the U.S.S.R. Modern methods of cultivation and the natural fertility of the soil give Adjaria a yield of 3·325 tons per hectare (2½ acres) as compared with the average of 3 tons per hectare in India and Ceylon. The industry was rapidly developed. In 1932 the output of tea was 1400 tons. In 1940 it stood in the region of 50,000 tons. This increase pleased not only the statistician, who could gloat over the percentage increase, but also those inveterate tea-drinkers, the Russians.

Azerbaijan entered late into tea-growing. But already it has increased its area under cultivation from 295 acres in 1934 to 12,055 acres in 1940.

Although the climate in the Caucasus varies considerably from district to district, the winter is very mild in the lowlands of Adjaristan. Even in the coldest month the thermometer very rarely goes down to below minus 5° C. and then not every year. The last nips of winter usually come in the early spring. The mimosa has already bloomed and passed away. The collective farmers, however, do not allow themselves to be deceived by the mimosa. A careful night watch is posted in the citrus plantations, and if the night brings a sudden cold spell there is a frantic to-do. Men, women, and children stream out of the cottages on the collective farm to create the warmth which the earth has denied to the delicate leaves of the orange- and lemon-trees. Enormous oil-burners are lit near the trees, and a heavy, black pall of smoke covers the plantation, keeping the cold air away from the sensitive trees.

Adjaria accounts for 70 per cent. of total production of citrus fruits. The last harvest gave 400 million of these fruits as against 13 million in 1932. The sub-tropical climate, the heavy rains, have been properly utilized, and the regained marshlands and virgin forests of ancient Colchis have been converted into flowering gardens. They provide the Moscovite, the worker in the Urals and in far Karaganda, with juicy oranges, peaches and plums, lemons and apricots.

Primitive methods of viticulture have been abandoned. The old overcrowded vineyards have disappeared, and the better sites and slopes, previously Crown property, have been made over to collective farmers.

Rice is one of the most important grain crops in the swampy and saline areas of the North Caucasus and Daghestan. But as these areas are being reclaimed and are needed for cotton, it is probable that rice, like maize, will migrate to other areas where it need not take the water away from the cotton.

NICOTINELESS TOBACCO

Thousands of pounds have been spent in trying to devise methods which would prevent staining the smoker's hands and teeth with nicotine, let alone save him from inhaling this mild poison to the detriment of his health. Thousands more pounds have been spent trying to persuade him that certain tobaccos have less nicotine than others. But nobody, it appears, thought of growing nicotineless tobacco or, rather, if they did they gave it up as a bad job.

How can the tobacco-weed be persuaded to lose its nicotine and yet retain its quality and aroma ? This prob-

lem intrigued the Soviet scientist, Alexander Shmook, for many years. He had earned for himself a great reputation by extracting citric acid from the makhorka plant, a sort of coarse tobacco which is grown on almost every farmstead throughout the Soviet Union.

Hybridization—that is, the grafting of one plant on another—had yielded astonishing results, as the experiments of the Russian scientist Michurin and the American Luther Burbank have shown. Academician Shmook decided to try to graft tobacco to a number of other plants such as deadly nightshade and the common tomato. The graft or scion, as it is called, thrived on both these plants. When plucked and submitted to the usual drying and maturing process the tobacco-leaf was found on analysis to contain no nicotine whatsoever.

The process was then reversed, and the tomato plant became the scion and was grafted to tobacco. Fruit came in the natural way, and experimenters who bit into them for the sake of science found them extremely bitter. They also became considerably indisposed for a short time after their meal. The nicotine had passed into the tomato. Hence Shmook proved that it was possible to grow a nicotineless tobacco that in no way lost its inherent qualities by the natural extraction of nicotine.

It is still too early to say whether this method is capable of large-scale exploitation. If it is—and the war will undoubtedly postpone developments—some of the best tobacco grown round Sukhum, in the Abkhazian Republic (incorporated in Georgia), will be available in an entirely new form.

HITLER'S SMALLEST BUT PERHAPS DECISIVE ENEMY

Large areas in Georgia are devoted to the cultivation of the mulberry-tree. The succulent purple fruit is not, however, the principal attraction. The leaves of the tree are what is wanted. The humble little caterpillar that feeds on these leaves and passes into a sleep from which it never awakes provides the silk which goes to make parachutes for one of the world's largest paratroop armies.

Last year the old-established silk industry in Georgia produced something like 18 per cent. of total Union output of silk. Collective farms throughout the Caucasus are encouraged to double their cocooneries, and many collective farmers rear cocoons in their spare time as a patriotic hobby.

More than 40 per cent. of Georgia is wooded. Much of it is primeval forest still. The country has long been famous for its walnut, a wood extensively used in making furniture. But an even more profitable tree, the tung-tree, was introduced in 1933. Its home of origin was China. This tree yields a particurly valuable oil from its thick clusters of nuts. Its oil is more like a varnish and is indispensable in shipbuilding, aircraft engineering and other industries. Many acres are now devoted, especially by the Okumi Collective Farm, to the cultivation of tung-tree groves.

Many thousands of eucalyptus-trees have also been planted, not only for their oil and gum but also for their propensity of acting as a soil-binder. They have given

their friendly assistance in ridding the swampy districts of Western Georgia of malaria.

Other exotic trees like the lacquer-tree, the wax-tree, and gutta-percha, and plants like the New Zealand flax, ramee, and bamboo, are also grown.

FLYING FISH AND SILVER FOXES

Unfortunately, there are no flying fish in the Caspian or Black Sea. But fish have been exchanged by air between the two seas so as to increase their respective varieties. The little whitefish fry was sent on a long journey from the freshwater lakes and streams round Leningrad to breed in the high mountain lake of Sevan in Armenia.

In the large 875,000-acre animal sanctuary in the Caucasus, deer, chamois, foxes, wolves, mountain turkey, bears, and badgers make their home. Animals from various Siberian sanctuaries are also imported into the Caucasus and *vice versa*. The Caucasian chamois, for example, a very delicate little beast, has gone to multiply his kind in Central Asia. The Caucasus even possesses its own silver-fox farm, set up in the high mountain resort of Bakuriani. It was not considered that this valuable pelted animal would breed in the climatic conditions prevailing in the south. But with a careful diet these foxes have become so acclimatized that the Bakuriani concern is supplying foxes to fur-farms in the north !

There was some difficulty in persuading the squirrel to live in the abundant forests of the Caucasus. Whenever he was imported it was found that he was speedily devoured by the marten. Some one had the bright idea of bringing the lagomys to the Caucasus—an animal

which the marten apparently relishes even more than squirrel. Consequently the squirrel is now able to live in peace—at the expense, I am afraid, of the luckless little lagomys.

ACHTUNG—COSSACKS !

The territory of the Cossacks of the Don and the Kuban lies between the mountains of the Caucasus and the estuaries of the Volga and the Don. This is a region of fabulous wealth, an overflow, as it were, of the black earth steppes of Ukrainia. "A man has only to spit on the ground," so the proverb runs, "for a melon to appear."

The State and collective farms, of the North Caucasus and the Cossack country, produce about 10 per cent. of the total wheat output of the Soviet Union, or, to put it differently, about half of the great Ukrainian harvest itself. Oats, barley, maize—these cereals thrive here. There are also great waving plains of sunflowers, giants that grow well over the height of even a man mounted on a horse. They are a picture for Van Gogh, set against the deep blue sky of summer and the dark loamy earth from which they spring.

Besides yielding valuable oil, the sunflower seeds are as popular as peanuts, say. Cracked between the teeth, the white kernel is very tasty. Every one eats them, in the street, in the cinema, at work and play, at all hours of the day.

The Cossacks of the Kuban differ slightly from their brethren around the other two great rivers of the Don and the Dnieper. True, they came to the Caucasus as in-

vaders. They brought the Tsar's rule on the steel tips of their raw-thonged whips. They were given fat pastures on the North Caucasian plains as a reward.

No one had a good word to say for them in the hills. If the Turks called the hillmen the Cherkess people—that is, " cutters of roads, " or brigands—the people of Daghestan considered the Cossacks a little worse than devils who had helped to capture Shamyl. (Moreover, had they not fought in an unknightly fashion with such treacherous means as cannons and mines ?) We have already noted that even within living memory the woman's marriage oath in the Caucasus carried the stipulation that her husband-to-be should have stolen at least one Cossack's horse or, better still, killed a Cossack. The propriety of such an oath was explained on the theory that " the robber committed but one crime, and the robbed a hundred."

The Cossacks were an individual folk, and they clung obstinately to old ways of farming and older ways of living. To fan their martial spirit, the Tsarist regime did everything to encourage anti-Semitism among them. But now the ideas of brotherhood and the flourishing state of collective farms, where prosperity is for all to share, have removed all envy directed against them. The dagger has been sheathed for ever ; artificial hates have died for very lack of sustenance.

The Jews, like many other nationalities living and working on Cossack collective farms, wear the Cossack uniform and consider themselves Cossacks. Major-General Dovator, who fell leading the great Cossack charge which threw the Germans back from Moscow in

December 1941, was a Jew. That the Cossacks will always remember.

THE RIVERS OF PARADISE

Armenia is said to be the source of the rivers that flowed through the Garden of Eden. Eden has passed, yet the rivers of the Caucasus remain, swift and bountiful as ever, turning giant electrical turbines. The waters of Eden give light and power, and flow into irrigation canals. But the great Lake Sevan system, which is nearing completion, compares in magnitude and ambition with the Tennessee Valley project in America. The cheap power produced by the new hydro-electric stations will be a source of new industries and will turn the Caucasus into one of the most important industrial areas in the Soviet Union.

Parts of the Lake Sevan project have already been constructed. But big ideas have not prevented the growth of small-type stations, with outputs ranging between 1000 and 25,000 kilowatts. Out of a total number of 549 small hydro-electric power-stations in the U.S.S.R. 207 are situated in the Caucasus, in the following proportions :

Republic	No. of Stations	Total Output
North Caucasus . .	59	799,000 kilowatts
Georgia	68	917,000 ,,
Azerbaijan . . .	42	403,000 ,,
Armenia	38	292,000 ,,
	207	2,411,000

STONE PLUS COKE PLUS POWER=RUBBER

There are three main processes for synthetic rubber production :

(1) The use of alcohol as a base.

(2) Coke and limestone to make calcium carbide.

(3) The use of the by-products of the petroleum industry (the method employed in the U.S.A.)

It is this second process, limestone plus coke plus power, which is used by the great Synthetic Rubber Works at Erivan, capital of Armenia. This method makes a great demand on electric power. It takes 40,000 kilowatts to make one ton of synthetic rubber. Compare this with aluminium, to make a ton of which takes only 20,000-25,000 kilowatts.

Now, obviously, the large-scale development of the synthetic rubber industry in Erivan would not have been possible had power and raw materials like coke and limestone not been at hand. But coke and limestone were within easy reach. So was water. So the power resources of the Zanga river, which flows from the 7219-feet high Lake Sevan and joins the river Arax not far from Erivan, are tapped at the Kanakirsk Power Station. This station which was completed under the Third Five-year Plan, has a maximum capacity of 88,000 kilowatts. The second and much larger station of Gyumush, with a capacity of approximately 250,000 kilowatts, is rapidly moving towards completion.

In other parts of the Caucasus there are large scale hydro-electric stations being built. In Southern Georgia, for example, on the river Khrama, a new station of 90,000 kilowatts is being constructed. It will be the highest of

four power centres on the Khrama Falls. A smaller plant of 48,000 kilowatts has already been built at Rionsk, near Kutais.

At Mangechaursk, 260 kilometres from Baku, a power-station which will be the largest in Azerbaijan is under construction. Not only will it have a capacity of 300,000 kilowatts but, like the Sevan Zanga project, will aid in the development of the growing machine-building, chemical, clothing, and light industrial undertakings in Baku and Gandzha.

The railways running out from Baku, as a result of an increasing supply of cheap electricity, have gradually been electrified.

EACH FOR ALL AND ALL FOR EACH

When a sudden drought threatened the fields of Karbardino Balkaria some years ago every one, from the chairman of the Supreme Soviet to the youngster just able to carry a spade, turned out. They went to wrest water out of the hills. In the space of a few days half the collective farm land was irrigated, but then the rains came to save further labour. Collective misfortune, collective salvation.

More recently the collective farmers in Daghestan decided to build an irrigation canal some sixty miles long. They were fired by the example of the builders of the Ferghana Canal. This canal, some 166 miles long, was dug in the incredible space of forty-five days by thousands of collective farmers of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. It was an epic. Every one who read about it marvelled. But the Daghestan farmers decided to do more. Working with them were thirteen different

nationalities including mountain Jews, Nogai Tartars, Kumyks, Russians, Ukrainians, Lesghians. Many of them came from collective farms which would in no way benefit from the sixty-mile canal they were helping to build

Where was the incentive ? Were they geographers who knew that by helping to irrigate a land in compa rative proximity to their own they were bound to benefit? I think not. It was one of those frequent demonstrations of unity that seized people in all parts of the Soviet Union, the desire to create and build something in common for the simple satisfaction of knowing that there is heroism in labour, and that prosperity of one region inevitably helps to create prosperity in another.

The Kumyk collective farmers who came to help on this Daghestan irrigation canal brought every imaginable domestic comfort to the scene—kitchens, tables beds, bedding. Newspapers were delivered to them regularly by aeroplane. They themselves published a wall paper and in the evenings, when it grew too dark to work, they entertained the other folk with their wind orchestra.

These are but few examples of collective will to over- come natural difficulties. There are hundreds of others. Besides this, the harnessing of rivers and falls has brought not only electricity for industry and domestic use, but enabled vast areas of formerly drought-ridden land to be irrigated. For example, when the Sevan-Zanga project is finished, 190,000 acres of the virtually waterless plains of Sardanabad will be under cotton cultivation.

Such irrigation by collective farmers and electrical

power development, have already given Azerbaijan second place after the Central Asian Republics as producer of raw cotton. By 1940 she increased her acreage of Egyptian cotton by 8·5 per cent. over 1932.

The 1938 figure of 343,900 acres under cotton cultivation is the latest available. New varieties have been created by Soviet selectionists and experimentists, and there has been some talk of producing cotton already dyed 'on the bush,' so to speak. This is obtained by mixing certain chemicals in the soil. The only colour so far successfully induced is green. But this naturally dyed fibre is considered to be superior in durability to cotton dyed by the established methods. Incidentally, Caucasian and Turkestan cotton grows pure white and does not, like Egyptian cotton, need bleaching.

In Armenia, as a result of the added acreage given by the Shizaksaly Canal and the Sardarabski Canals, cotton is flourishing on the sun-baked, formerly drought-infested Ararat plateau There are also large vineyards and fruit and tobacco plantations.

Georgia does not grow cotton on such an extensive scale as either Azerbaijan or Armenia. Production of cotton yarn, however, has increased twenty-one times in 1940 over the 1913 level.

The Moscow spinning and weaving plants are still the largest in the country. But the whole of the Transcaucasus increased its annual output of cotton fabric to one hundred million metres in 1937 as compared to thirty-two million metres in 1932.

The pre-Revolutionary cotton works in Baku used to produce solely for the Persian market, and all cotton

goods coming to the Transcaucasus had to be sent from Moscow. Now the large new spinning and weaving mills of the city of Leninakan in Armenia produce from 117,000 spindles as much as 33 million yards of textile per annum. Two cotton ginneries have also been built in Armenia with a capacity of 22,000 tons of processed cotton annually.

Together with the newly constructed textile works at Gandzha in Azerbaijan and the Georgian mills, more than enough is left to supply local needs and still to permit large distribution to other parts of the Soviet Union.

DECIDING THE FATE OF A SEA

The sea refused to obey the behest of King Canute. The tide refused to retreat. But modern man does not have to give orders to the sea. He can obliterate it—at his peril.

The word 'sea' is perhaps a misnomer when applied to the Caspian. It was that in the dim ages when it was joined to the Black Sea. Now, and for many centuries past, it has been a salt lake, the largest in the world, four or five times the size of Lake Superior. The level of a sea remains constant. The level of a lake varies with the rate of evaporation and the amount of flow of incoming rivers and streams. The greatest 'feed' of the Caspian is the river Volga. But other rivers flow into the Caspian as well—the Ural and the Emba and the three rivers of the Caucasus—the Kura, the Terek, and the Sulak. Despite the contribution of these rivers, the Caspian is a shallow sea, 86 feet below sea-level. If the Caspian were to lose its supply of river water, or if by

some means the flow was reduced, it would grow more shallow and create still larger deltas of swampy ground.

This is a problem which has to be faced. Although the giant Dnieper Dam is no more, blown up by the very hands that had built it, another and far greater dam is being built at the Kuibishev bend of the river Volga. The upper reaches of the Volga have already been utilized for electricity. One station of Ivankovo has been built at the head of the Volga-Don Canal. Two others—one at Uglich and another at Rybinsk—are nearing completion. But the Kuibishev project envisages twenty more hydro-electric stations along the whole route of the Volga. It aims to utilize the gradual but considerable drop which the Volga makes on its way to the Caspian.

When the Volga-Don Canal is completed more stations will be built to harness the water. This canal will link the Baltic Sea, the White Sea, the Caspian, and the Black Sea. Moreover, the Kuibishev project intends to irrigate the Trans-Volga area, a territory larger than the whole of Wales. The total annual output of this vast electrical scheme will be somewhere in the region of 50 billion kilowatt hours, a figure which only electrical engineers can fully savour.

But what of the Caspian ? How will the Caspian react to this robbery of waters vital to its existence ? The Caspian is important both as a transport lane of 35 per cent. of Soviet Union shipping and as a producer of about half of the total fish-catch. An even more terrible possibility exists. If the area of the Caspian Sea is considerably reduced the weather itself would change, and the hot winds, sweeping over the deserts of the east, would

create havoc and bring desolation to the fertile regions of the North Caucasus, the Don, and the Ukraine.

Of course, all these points have been considered. The Kuibishev project and the Volga-Don Canal are moving rapidly towards completion. The planners—one might almost say the dreamers—who translated these projects to terms of mortar and steel, dams and power-houses and canals, will not let the Caspian die.

The great rivers which flow into the Arctic Ocean and the White Sea with such prodigal abundance, such as the Pechora, Vychegda, Onega, and Sukhona, will be joined by canals to the Volga, and the Caspian will receive their cold water and continue to be the largest lake in the world.

POTATOES AND DANDELIONS

In time of war food resources have to be husbanded. One cannot afford to turn good potatoes into alcohol. Yet alcohol from potatoes and other food products is used both in Germany and the U.S S.R. as a base for synthetic rubber production. That is why to-day the Erivan Synthetic Rubber Works, which use a different process, are so important in the war economy of the Soviet Union.

Before the Revolution Russian and foreign capital abandoned all hope of establishing large-scale industries in Georgia. The prime requisite of industry was coal. Baku oil was too expensive to use as a smelting agent. But for one small coal-field with a negligible production, no other deposits in the Caucasus were found.

Had there been no coal at all in the Caucasus, the Erivan Synthetic Rubber Works would have been hard

pressed to find the essential coke for its calcium carbide-coke process. But in 1937 the total production of coal in the Caucasus from the two major Tkvargelskoe and Tkirbulskoe coal-fields and other small workings produced 1,400,000 tons. Although this coal does not compare in quality with that of the Donetz Basin, it is sufficiently good and can be obtained in adequate quantities for the Erivan Synthetic Rubber Plant. The unique type of Armenian limestone is near at hand and in almost inexhaustible quantities. The power, as we have seen, is assured.

In addition to the alcohol and the calcium carbide-coke method of artificial rubber production in the Soviet Union, a rubbery juice, or latex, has in recent years been derived from the dandelion-like plant known as kok-saghiz. Some varieties of this plant yield as much as 18 per cent. 'rubber.' The particular advantage of this plant is that it will grow in almost any latitude, even as far as the Arctic Circle. But though the kok-saghiz plantations are rapidly being extended, the Erivan Synthetic Rubber Works are a major asset to the Soviet Union's war industry.

PROTECTION AGAINST BURGLARS

Manganese is an excellent alloy for burglar-proof safes. It is one of the best steel-hardeners in metallurgical industry. It goes to make battleship- and tank-armour as well as gun-barrels and machine-cutting tools. Manganese is playing its part to defeat the Axis burglars.

The Soviet Union is the greatest manganese-producing country in the world, and controls approximately 73 per cent. of total world reserves. One of the principal

deposits are those at Nikopol in the Ukraine. They are now in German hands. All machinery has been scorched according to the best methods. Until machinery and transport are completely restored the Nikopol manganese mines will yield but a fraction of their former output.

The Chiaturi mines in the Caucasus, forty miles from the town of Kutais, account for two-thirds of total Union output of manganese. In 1937 the production figure stood at 1,650,000 metric tons. Manganese content of the ore, between 60 per cent. and 63 per cent., is extremely high. Extraction is not difficult, and the 1937 figure has been considerably exceeded by 1942.

A large ferro-manganese plant has been erected near the mines, and started production in 1935. A second plant has already been constructed so that the transportation of the ore in its raw state has been completely obviated, and the processed manganese can be sent to the great Ural steel works. The monopoly—apart from the Nikopol deposits of manganese in the Caucasus—promises to be broken by the discovery of thirty-three million tons of ore deposits near Labino and Maikop. These deposits, however, together with those found in the Bashkir Republic, have not yet been developed, and Chiaturi will continue its lead for a good many years yet.

SOUNDING BRASS

Despite the demands made on coal by the synthetic rubber industry, pig iron, which was formerly imported into the Caucasus, is now smelted in two large metallurgical works at Zestaphon and Dashkesan. In the latter place deposits of some two million tons with an average

of 60 per cent. content of metal, have been found. There are other iron- and steel-works now under construction in Georgia. No doubt the war will provide an additional impetus to the development of this industry. Reports appeared in the *Moscow News* of January 5, 1942, which claim that Armenia is now producing "even the most complex arms."

Copper is undoubtedly the most important metal produced after manganese in the Caucasus. The copper resources of Armenia form about one-eighth of the Soviet Union's total reserves. The annual output of the Allah-verdi and Kafan copper-smelting works is over 10,000 tons. There are also large copper deposits at Akhtala, south of Tiflis, and in the Tchorokh Valley, in South Adjaristan. Copper is mined too at Zangezur (the copper here has been worked since Biblical times and the name of the district means 'Sounding Brass').

Molybdenum exists in small quantities in the Agarak area. In the Caucasus something like 25,000 tons of molybdenum are being developed. This is a remarkable steel-strengthening metal. The Germans, in particular, use it to line their heavy-calibre guns. It is used also in most armament industries for rifle barrels and propeller shafts and similar products where great strength is required.

There are rich outcrops of lead near Gori, in Georgia, as well as zinc. Deposits of mercury, cobalt, arsenic, tungsten, nickel, and sulphur remain for future development; and radium has recently been located in Kakhetia.

The Caucasus is particularly famed for its semi-precious stones such as porphyry, onyx marble, and

granites. The Caucasian onyx marble—a beautiful transparent stone with wavy lines of greens and greys and blues and pinks and browns—has been used in the decoration of the Moscow Metro.

INDUSTRY AND WAGES

Wages in themselves—however high—are no indication of prosperity if there are no goods and no services on which they may be spent. The problem of creating such light industries that enable the wage-earner to enjoy not only a minimum standard of living, but one where his increasing capacity to buy is satisfied by the rapid expansion of what may be termed 'luxury production,' has been systematically tackled in the Caucasus.

The three Five-year Plans set aside considerable budgetry revenue for the development of such light industrial undertakings as shoe and clothing, confectionery, furniture, musical instrument, canneries, tobacco and tea factories. Some of the undertakings have already been noted.

War conditions will inevitably modify and reduce to a considerable extent all the pleasant 'consumers' goods' available in the Soviet Union. That is a price which has to be paid by all countries engaged in total struggle.

The concentration on heavy industrial output will continue so long as it is necessary, and every standard will be sacrificed by the State and the individual citizen in so far as material goods are affected which are not strictly necessary to the war effort.

The spiritual values will continue to be enlarged and enriched, for that is a standard that no one would either

expect to sacrifice nor, indeed, will sacrifice, no matter what the fortunes of war hold in store. Literacy cannot be untaught though libraries and books are destroyed. Even if the war turns large areas of the Soviet Union into shambles nothing will conquer or pervert the social inheritance which has been won and built up.

As we have already noted, there has been a considerable increase in the average wage of collective farmers in the Caucasus. The same is no less true among industrial workers. In Azerbaijan, for example, wages increased in 1941 by 218 per cent. over 1932. The ability to spend these wages also increased. In the first place, there was a tremendous development of what one may playfully call the 'cultural industry' in the shape of books, theatres, concerts, films, and such like. In the second place, the demand for consumers' goods was met by the expansion of various light industries, such as those already mentioned.

The development of the food industry in Georgia, especially in respect to canned goods, is remarkable when compared to the 1913 level. In 1940 the production had increased by something like 242 times. The Armenian canneries showed a yearly output of twenty million cans of preserved fruits and vegetables in 1940.

The Batum citrus fruit works, a second section of which is now in construction, already handles 40 million citrus fruits per annum. There are also several tea processing factories in Adjaria and big engineering works making machinery for the tea factories. There are also plants dealing with the increased output of the tung-oil. In 1940 the production of industrial enterprises of this area stood in the region of 234 million roubles.

As an illustration of urban industrial development in the Caucasus, Tiflis and Erivan will serve as any other.

Industrial Tiflis includes such undertakings as : chemical works, clothing and furniture factories, cotton-seed oil works, film studios, engineering works, factory for oil-extracting implements, margarine works, silk-spinning works, woollen and knitted goods industries.

Erivan almost complements this development. There are tanneries, clothing and furniture works, film studios, canneries, tobacco factories, in addition to the Synthetic Rubber Works. One new tobacco factory turns out 1700 million cigarettes per annum.

Similar developments in smaller towns and cities can also be observed. The object has been to create as many local light industries as possible.

Out of this maze of facts and figures, one thing stands out clearly: the Transcaucasian Republics have ceased to be purely agricultural areas, although their tea and cotton do play an important role in Soviet economy.

Manganese production of the Caucasus, and copper, are important. But more important still is oil production. In this respect the Soviet Caucasus stands paramount.

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Chapter X

SOVIET OIL

Oil is a slippery enough business for the expert. The layman, I am told, is apt to stop on thin ice. I have attempted in this chapter to keep my balance under the scrutiny of one of the world's greatest oil experts, to whom an all too inadequate acknowledgment has already been made at the beginning of the book. The facts given are as accurate as can be obtained on the subject. The opinions expressed belong solely to the author.

To talk about oil, stripped of its technical terms, is probably as difficult as to describe the flight of an aeroplane without using the word 'aerodynamics.' But oil, as we have seen, is an important, perhaps the most important, contribution that the Caucasus has made and is making towards our common victory.

Oil is, of course, the indiscriminate ally of the one that possesses it. Soviet oil has been more than an ally. It has been the means by which the Red Army, all the Soviet forces, have been able to put up such epic resistance. What is more, Soviet oil has been a great contributory factor to the change from the defensive to the offensive.

Soviet oil has not only supplied the Army's requirements; it has played an equally important role in keeping open supply lines. It has enabled vital transport services, far in the interior of the Soviet Union, to function

with speed and efficiency. Not only may the leapfrog industries, the removal of populations, be in great part credited to oil, but oil has also enabled manufacturing and agricultural concerns to maintain their output. It has in some part, no doubt, helped to counterbalance the temporary loss of the Donetz coal-mines. (A number of these mines have now been recaptured and are in service again.)

Other significant facts emerge. The oil industry is the only heavy industry which has escaped the material savagery of war. No Soviet oil area is in Hitler's possession, and only a very small part of the industry's refining capacity has been seized.

Paradoxical as it may seem, the German occupation of large tracts of the Ukraine and White Russia have resulted in the saving of approximately 12 million tons of oil which these areas formerly consumed. This is a strange trick of war, an ill-wind that blows some consolation.

WHAT IS OIL?

The question is not so superficial as it may at first appear. Many have in all innocence believed that oil production figures consist solely of petrol. But this is not so. Crude petroleum is a complicated mixture of liquids. It contains gases and impurities of various kinds. The presence of gas enables the oil to gush or flow naturally. Once the gas has escaped resort has to be made to artificial pumping.

To continue the ABC: Crude oils differ greatly in appearance and character, even though they may be

found in the same field. For example, some crudes are black, extremely heavy so that the oil flow is very 'lazy.' Other crudes may be light, the colour of a good sherry. Some crudes suffer from swift solidification. Their high paraffin-wax content makes them grow hard when they come up to the surface. Some of these crudes solidify so much that they have to be heated before any transportation can be attempted.

Now the question of yield: some crudes give up to 30 per cent. of lubricating oil by distillation. Others supply only 1 per cent. of lubricating oil. The petrol content is equally unstable. Some give only 6 per cent. petrol, others yield as much as 90 per cent.

The conclusion, therefore, is that volume or total production of what we call 'oil' does not mean the same volume in terms of petrol or lubricants.

Gas must be removed from the crudes in separators, as it is both highly inflammable and poisonous. In the past, and probably in some fields to-day, though not in the Soviet Union, this gas is burned out, destroyed without being put to any useful purpose. In up-to-date oilfields the gas is diverted to power-stations, where it is used as fuel, or it may be conducted to serve cities for heat and light. Another important by-product of gas is carbon-black, which is used in the manufacture of electrodes, those vital accessories to searchlights.

The following list reveals, perhaps, the variety of products which may be derived from crude petroleum:

(1) Motor fuel.

(2) Kerosene, used as tractor fuel or for lighting purposes, and also as a solvent in industry.

(3) Gas oil for Diesel engines.

(4) Fuel oil replaces coal in marine boilers of battleships, etc. The British Navy, for example, and, indeed, every modern navy, uses fuel oil. It is also employed in central-heating plants.

(5) Lubricating oil, vital to all machinery.

(6) Paraffin-wax, the basic material for candles; used in the making of matches, grease-proof and water-proof paper, as well as various pharmaceutical products. It also serves in the manufacture of explosives.

(7) Asphalt for road-making and building.

(8) Petroleum coke for the manufacture of electrodes.

The list could be lengthened to include alcohol, glycerine, resins, and various substances utilized in the production of synthetic rubber.

The frequent use of the word 'octane' deserves some explanation without necessarily going into all the complexities of oil chemistry. Especially important is it to know why octane plays such a big role in warfare.

All petrols have an octane content, some of a higher degree than others. By mixing in certain chemicals, the rate of 'knock' can be considerably reduced—that is, the natural explosive power of the petrol is softened to reduce the wear and tear on cylinders.

It was an American by the name of Thomas Midgley who found that the anti-knock quality of a petrol can be greatly increased by adding a small quantity of tetraethyl lead, in the proportion of something like one in a thousand.

Special processes are used to refine the petrol so that it is ready to accept this admixture. The higher the

octane index of a petrol the more can the petrol be compressed. This means that a given load of petrol of a higher octane number will give greater power or a lower consumption rate as compared to a petrol of low octane number.

Now the military advantage of using what is known as high octane spirit in aviation is obvious from the fact that a plane using a 100-octane fuel has 20 per cent. more speed on a straight flight and 25 per cent. more manoeuvrability and climbing speed than a similar plane using 87-octane fuel. It means that a plane with 100-octane spirit can carry a heavier bomb-load or stay up in the air longer than a plane using the 87-octane fuel.

THE CAUCASUS OILFIELDS

The fields of Baku, Maikop, and Grozny produce somewhere between 85 per cent. and 90 per cent. of total oil production in the Soviet Union; that is to say, approximately 30 million tons annually. That leaves another 4 million tons or so outside of the Caucasian fields.

The main Baku fields stand on the Apsheron Peninsula. They have been the principal producers since the first well was sunk in 1871. According to reliable data, the Baku fields are estimated to possess something like 1325 million tons of proved oil reserves. These proved reserves are sufficient to last fifty-five years at the present rate of extraction. Compare these figures with the proved American reserves which are calculated to last for eighteen years at the present high rate of

production. These facts, of course, ignore new reserves which are constantly being discovered in both the Soviet Union and the United States.

In 1937 it was considered that the Soviet Union possessed 32 per cent. of all the proved reserves in the world. Truly an enormous figure.

An interesting enterprise at Baku is the development of under-sea drilling which began in March 1939 at Lenin Bay ; a new marine oilfield covering about 1250 acres is being opened up. Great bells are sunk out at sea, suspended from huge oil barges. Drills are then worked through the bell, and the oil is towed back in the barges for refining.

New but relatively small wells have been discovered in Georgia at Nlirzaani (about fifty miles east of Tiflis), at Supsa, near Borjom, Shirakaga Steppe, and elsewhere. It is too early to judge their importance, but it is almost certain that there are many other areas in the Caucasus which are highly petroliferous, and which await development.

In the North Caucasus the Grozny and Kuban-Maikop oil-centres as well as fields at Makhatch-Kala, Malgobek, and Hadyzkinsk, produce between them approximately 15 per cent. of total output, or about 5 million tons of oil each year.

OTHER OIL AREAS

The importance and, indeed, the vital role of the Caucasian fields are apparent. To break this preponderance of the southern oil areas has certainly been the object of Soviet economy. The same motives which moved the architects of the Five-year Plans to carry

industry eastward to the Urals and beyond induced them to seek and develop areas outside the Caucasus.

The figures planned for 1942 anticipate that non-Caucasian areas should produce as much as 25 per cent. of the total of 48 million tons, or, in tonnage figures, 12 million tons of crude. The advantage such an expansion would have in easing the transport of oil, as well as in the strategic merits of spreading one's industries as far from the war-front as possible, is apparent.

Tremendous activity is going on at this moment in vast areas between the Urals and the Volga. New centres have been developed at Ishimbaevo, Sterlitamak, Syzran, and Bugurustan. Already there has been an increase of 11 per cent. over the 1940 production in these areas. The potentialities of this region, known as the 'Second Baku,' are enormous. In the first place, the Second Baku covers an area of something like 1,000,000 square miles. The Baku oilfields in Azerbaijan are only 1 per cent. of this area. Moreover, the Second Baku is believed to contain 32 per cent. of all known reserves in the Soviet Union against 29 per cent. in the Baku fields.

The Emba fields, in Kazakhstan, are being worked on an increasing scale. The new fields of Central Asia in the Republics of Uzbek, Tadzhik, and Turkmen are also producing oil. This year the figures should show a considerable increase on the 2·1 per cent. of total production obtained last year. The North Sakhalin output stands at approximately 1·1 per cent. of the total which is nevertheless of considerable local importance.

Fields for future development have been plotted along the whole Western slopes of the Urals. N. Mikhaylov in his book *Soviet Geography* says :

> A hundred years ago large haulers on the white river at Sterlitamak in Bashkiria used, during their halts, to throw handfuls of earth on their bonfires to make them burn brighter. Who would have thought that these poor people who pulled their barges by ropes were on the edge of a great discovery ?

DIFFICULTIES

To plan is one thing. To execute is another. Hundreds of factors must be taken into consideration when speaking of oil development. The oil industry in the Soviet Union, although one of the oldest in the world, was by no means worked in the most economical fashion in pre-Revolutionary days.

The development of the oil industry in the post-Revolutionary Caucasus was necessarily slow. Production figures in 1920 were 3·9 million tons as compared with the 1916 figures of 9·7 million. Not only had the Revolution thrown the industry into disorder, but as it had been worked principally by foreign companies and foreign experts, the sudden withdrawal of personnel after the Revolution meant a considerable time-lapse before new technicians could be trained. Skilled labour had been dispersed, machinery had been ruined by neglect, oil-wells were sealed up through disuse and were flooded, and vital tubings were fractured by landslides and other causes. Moreover, the general level of technique was very low. Drilling was frequently primitive if judged by American standards.

These facts are given substance in a publication entitled *Caucasia*, a handbook prepared under the direction of the historical section of the Foreign Office (No. 54, published by H. M. Stationery Office (1920)): "The Grozny oilfields suffered much more than those of Baku and Maikop in 1918. Almost all the oil-wells and plant have been destroyed or burned, so that production will be impossible for some years to come."

Discussing the Maikop fields, the same handbook says, "The output has been very disappointing and has steadily declined since 1912."

On another page, concerning methods of working, we find:

> The continued use at Baku of a comparatively wasteful system has been a factor contributing to the successful competition of American oil in the world market, in spite of the fact that at Baku a few square miles produce as much oil as several thousands of square miles in America, and that a single Baku oil fountain has actually yielded as much in one day as 25,000 wells in America. The American system has been adopted at Grozny and Maikop. Manila ropes have been very generally replaced by wire ropes.

It appears, according to this handbook, that a British Consular report for 1913 "described Caucasia as a poverty-stricken country, making only the slowest progress." In the opinion of the compilers of this handbook, however, "This estimate seems harsh in view of the increasing exports from the three chief ports and the development of the large Russian oil trade. The oilfields, however, are exploited by international capital, so that most of the profits derived from the trade leave the country."

Whatever the merits of private enterprise, it obviously made a mistake in considering the Maikop fields disappointing in 1912 and in not using up-to-date technique on the Baku fields. Comment is not needed on the dubious wisdom of the Tsarist Government in handing over the fields to be exploited by 'international capital.'

These very great initial handicaps must be borne in mind. They do not, of course, explain all the subsequent difficulties, but they certainly mitigate some of the criticisms which were lavished by foreign experts on the nascent Soviet oil industry. That there was mismanagement in some fields, lack of skilled labour and organizing talent, incomplete preparation, Soviet critics themselves admit. Indeed, the very improvement and development of the oil industry is due to the frequent airing of criticism in the Soviet Press.

EXPORT, CONSUMPTION, PLANS

There was considerable pother in foreign countries when the Soviet Union began exportation of oil on a larger scale in 1928. Competitive interests were particularly worried, fearing that the enormous reserves of the Caucasus would be thrown into the world market against them at what were called 'unfair prices.'

Very few people were able to diagnose the purpose and necessity of soviet export trade. Looking back, we may see that the Soviet Union had to compensate for its lack of foreign currency by exports. Foreign currency was needed for industrial expansion, especially to buy American and British machinery. In the peculiarly

hostile and non-co-operative atmosphere of the nineteen-twenties and -thirties there was only one thing the Soviet Union could do—that is, sell in the best market at the cheapest price, a business practice common enough to all firms.

There were, however, a few people (among them oil experts like Dr. Tokayer, of the Petroleum Press Bureau), who pointed out that Russia's growing consumption of oil would of necessity compel her to reduce her exports. In 1932 the zenith of oil exports was indeed reached. The figure stood at 6,200,000 tons. Thereafter the export figure steadily declined until in 1940 only half a million tons were exported.

The explanation of this phenomenon may be found in home consumption. After the United States of America Russia is the biggest consumer of oil in the world. Her requirements before the war were two and a half times greater than those of pre-war Britain.

The enormous strides made during the three Five-year Plans and the consequent mechanization of agriculture and transport prove this conclusively. The number of tractors in the Soviet Union in 1928 was 34,900. Exactly ten years later 500,000 tractors were in commission, not including the 160,000 agricultural "combined harvesters," etc., all making vast inroads into the Soviet Union" exportable surplus.

There was also an enormous increase in motor traffic. In 1930 there were 57,000 motor vehicles comprising 52,000 commercial vehicles and 5000 private cars. At the end of 1940 there was a total of 801,000 motor

vehicles made up of 699,000 commercial and 102,000 private cars.

To meet such gigantic requirements the Soviet Union reduced its exports. Indeed, consumption became so great that it even threatened to overtake production. That was the crux of a very serious problem.

To illustrate this point, let us look at the table prepared by the Birmingham Bureau of Research on Russian Economic Studies of Planned and Actual Production of Oil. It will be seen that the planned figure was rarely reached, although in recent years the percentage of real production has very nearly caught up with the planned figure. The extraordinary stimulus provided by the war as well as the general improvement of technique have already shown remarkable increases in the years 1941 and 1942.

PLANNED AND ACTUAL PRODUCTION

Year	Intended Figure	Crude Oil Production (Metric Tons)
FIRST FIVE-YEAR PLAN		
1928	13·2	11·7
1929	14·8	13·8
1930	16·8	18·9
1931	19·1	23·2
1932	21·7	22·3
SECOND FIVE-YEAR PLAN		
1933	23·0	21·4
1934	30·7	24·1
1935	35·0	25·2
1936	40·5	27·4
1937	46·8	28·0

Year	Intended Figure	Crude Oil Production (Metric Tons)
THIRD FIVE-YEAR PLAN		
1938 . . .	30·1	28·9
1939 . . .	32·8	29·7
1940 . . .	36·2	34·7

Many factors, as we have seen, militated against increased production. The continual need, for example, to find new fields, common to all oil industries, is by no means an easy task when these explorations have to be conducted in remote and inaccessible regions. Not only must roads be built, but pipe-lines and storage instillations be provided ; complete synchronization and the delivery of materials on time are also important factors. Naturally, too, human conditions must not be ignored. Housing facilities must be provided, recreational places, canteens.

Careless managers did on occasion hand wells over in a flooded condition. One Soviet technical journal said that "the head officers of a particular trust had contented themselves with writing all kinds of instructions." Paper bureaucracy has had to be ruthlessly combatted. Sometimes insufficient storage had been provided ; there were pipe-line leakages.

These criticisms can be explained to a certain extent if one considers that during 1937 there were frequent recurrences of open sabotage by hostile elements, such as the Trotskyists. They knew that by striking at the oil industry they were aiming at one of the vitals of Soviet

industry. This pre-war Fascist offensive was speedily crushed. In a subsequent chapter the activities of Hitler's happy band of warriors in the Caucasus and elsewhere are discussed.

THE SOVIET OIL INDUSTRY AT WAR

Continual and plentiful supply of oil is not only the concern of generals and highly placed industrial planners. Every manager, foreman, and workman on the oilfields realizes that the successful expansion of the oil industry is, to use the words of *Isvestia*, "the source of the defeat of the German Army."

In 1941 there was a considerable improvement in the quality of finished products. Distribution was speeded up. Greater economy and efficiency were to be observed. Naturally, detailed information and statistics are not available. But considerable proof may be deduced from reports suggesting that there has been increased drilling, in some part, no doubt, on account of the arrival of United States high-quality equipment. The search for new fields is yielding excellent results. Obsolete and idle refineries have been re-equipped, and petrol as well as Diesel oil used in tanks and armoured vehicles of all kinds has considerably improved in quality. For a number of years in the 'thirties the output of the Grozny oilfields remained comparatively stationary at less than 3 million tons. This figure is now being surpassed.

Great efforts are made to reduce time for repair and installation. This is, of course, an important factor. In Baku, Grozny, Maikop, and other oil districts *Pravda* maintains that "A further increase is also being achieved

by exploiting a number of wells which are not working, and by collecting, repairing, and utilizing large quantities of used pipes and other equipment."

Depots storing the heavy oil used by the Red Navy have been regrouped. The number of depots has been increased so that oil can be shipped from various points.

Before the war the U.S.S.R. imported a considerable quantity of petroleum, mainly gasoline, from the United States. It was incorrectly surmised at the time that this 'extra oil' was destined to go to Germany. Actually, the Soviet Union was gathering her stocks, probably laying in reserves in the Far Eastern provinces. It was cheaper to buy in the U.S.A. for Vladivostok than to ship petroleum from Baku or send it by rail-tank-cars, a distance of some six thousand miles.

On the outbreak of war considerable shipments were received from the U.S.A. of high-grade aviation fuel. Only a very small quanity of high octane fuel had been manufactured in the U.S.S.R. Since then Sedin, Peoples' Commissar for the Oil Industry, has reported that :

> the output of oil with a high octane index is steadily growing. At the same time experiments at the Baku and Grozny refining plants proved that aviation petrol could be obtained from oil of low octane index. Our oil industry now turns out aviation petrol from practically all kinds of oil extracted in the Soviet Union. New methods of refining, applied for the first time in 1941, considerably improved the quality of the Soviet petrol.

THE HUMAN ELEMENT

There are victories no less important than those won on the field of battle. In oil, as in other industries, the

Soviet 'guerrilla worker' has tackled his job with enterprise, especially the Stakhanovite and 200-percenter.

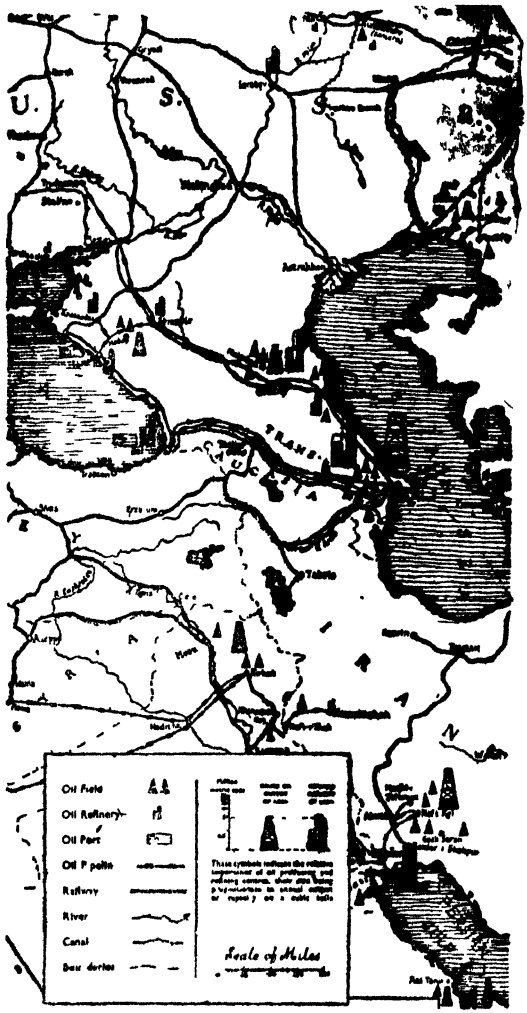
In Baku, for example, a team of young drillers has put three disused wells into production again and increased their output by 80 per cent., 50 per cent., and 30 per cent. respectively. All the equipment for the restoration of the old wells was manufactured from local resources. This team completed six months' work in two months.

The oil worker's job is a hard, dirty, and smelly one. A young Baku girl, after serving a brief apprenticeship, was recently promoted to be the foreman of a large oil well Industrial V.C.'s and D.S.O.'s, carrying the title of Hero of Soviet Labour, were recently awarded to a number of oil workers ; 85 of them were women.

In 1939 something like 1800 suggestions were received by persons employed by the Azerbaijan Oil Trust. By using only a few of these suggestions a total of 16 million roubles was saved.

REFINERIES, PIPE-LINES, TRANSPORT

The reconstruction of refineries and putting back into production those that were idle has done much to solve and eliminate the gap between the production and distillation of oil.



Part of an Oil Map of the U S S.R. showing Caucasia and the Surrounding Countries.

This is, of course, a very important factor in war-time when oil consumption is bound to go up. Not only is oil expended in actual warfare, but bigger demands have been made by the greatly increased activities of industry, mining, and agriculture. Their requirements are undoubtedly met in part by stocks carefully accumulated over recent months.

The Baku-Batum refinery centre is one of the largest in the world, and has an annual capacity of 18,500,000 tons. There are other refineries situated at Makhatch-Kala, Grozny, Armavir, Krasnodar, and Tuapse with a total annual capacity of 10 million tons. These refining centres are connected by pipe-line.

Other important refinery centres in U.S.S.R. in Europe are at Moscow, Gorki, Yaroslav, and Ufa. Large refineries are also to be found in Siberia and the Far East.

In the Caucasus there are 2750 miles of pipe-line, with a total carrying capacity of 10 million tons. As part of the transport system they do much to ease the distribution of oil. A double pipe-line links Baku and Batum. One of the pipes carries crudes, and the other is used for refined products. The old pipe-line is 550 miles long, and the new one 520 miles.

The other pipe-line system connects Makhatch-Kala with Grozny and goes on to Armavir and the Black Sea port of Tuapse. A branch line from Grozny leads to Rostov and then farther north to Trudovaya, in the Donetz Basin (see map at p. 166). By the recapture of Rostov and Trudovaya, the whole of this oil system is again in Soviet hands. The total length of this pipe-

line is 785 miles, and it handles 2,200,000 tons of oil annually.

Although these two systems manage to distribute 10 million tons between them, the bulk of Caucasian oil going to the important industrial regions of Moscow, Leningrad, and Eastern Ukraine, as well as to the collective farms of the Black Earth region, is transported by sea through the Caspian to the Volga and thence to Stalingrad, Saratov, and Kuibishev. Thirty-five per cent. of total Soviet shipping is found on the Caspian.

Water transport is naturally less expensive. When the Volga-Don Canal is completed it will be a useful connecting link for Caspian shipping with the Ukraine.

Earlier in the chapter it was pointed out that the Soviet Union gained 12 million tons of oil by the Nazi occupation of the Western Ukraine and White Russia. The Soviet Union was also able to remove the vital rail-tank-cars which had previously served these districts. The greater tonnage available in the interior has consequently helped to solve the problem of oil transport.

The presence and exploitation of oil in areas more wide-spread and strategically safer than the Caucasus will considerably improve the transportation of oil throughout the country.

WHAT IF . . .

We now deal with a hypothetical question. What if the Nazis seized the Caucasian oilfields ? The severity of such a blow to the Allied cause has already been discussed. But in war every contingency must be anticipated. The pivot of Axis ambitions balances on the Caucasus.

That the scorched earth policy would be relentlessly applied to the oilfields is apparent even to the Germans. But at the height of their advance in 1941 the Nazis boasted that they could restore the wells to production in thirty days. This is extravagant nonsense, an attempt at a psychological victory, and nothing else. With all their excellent organization the Nazis know that in reality only a very small part of the industry could be restored in anythig like six months. The oil under the ground is difficult to destroy, but it can be done by flooding the wells with salt water. The unexplored wells, of course, would still be there.

But even supposing the Nazis carried drilling equipment with them and the necessary skilled labour, the mere fact of bringing oil to the surface is not enough. Refineries cannot be built in a day, nor in thirty days. A really large refinery system takes at least two years to construct. The alternative would be to ship the oil to the Danube and thence into the interior of Germany. But this would require a considerable sea-going oil-tanker fleet. Moreover, as the pipe-lines and the railways would also presumably be destroyed, the initial transport problem would be an enormous one. Such refineries as they would be able to build over a given length of time would also serve as excellent targets for the Red Air Force and the R.A.F.

Labour would be another difficulty. The oil may not be able to leapfrog out of Hitler's reach—but men with the necessary experience and skill could do so well in advance.

These factors are, of course, a short-term view on the subject. Victory cannot be found in the all too frequent habit of rejoicing at the chickens Hitler will not be able to count. The trouble is that if he seizes the Caucasus the Soviet industry and fighting forces will suffer an enormous deprivation. It is on such positive premises that a policy of attack rather than defence must be based.

——:o:——

Chapter XI

QUISLINGS

The quisling is as old as history. Only the name is new. He was the man who opened the castle gates to let in the enemy in the Middle Ages, or the general who in the midst of battle suddenly switched sides. These were the exalted quislings of this earth.

The incentive to treachery was power, wealth perhaps, more rarely love. Not a few, however, imagined themselves as liberating Brutus. In this last role the quisling is the most dangerous. In his armoury he holds fine words like 'patriotism,' not to mention 'Christianity' or 'decency.' He has a different arrow for the strong and for the weak, for the muddled workman, the disillusioned clerk, the cynical politician.

What is most interesting about the quisling is not the very effective use to which he has been put in wartime. It is his past activities in a world that imagined itself at peace for nearly twenty years. He was the soldier of the undeclared war, the guerrilla fighter of Fascism.

The knights of the New Order include not only the Lavals, the Darlans, Quisling himself, Skorapadsky's Ukrainians, the Croat and Macedonian gangsters Pavelitch and Mihailoff, but also a little-known group of Caucasian Separatists. Their work was skilfully camouflaged. Their arena was not only the Caucasus, but the

length and breadth of the Middle East. Their finger was in every troubled pie. They served under Rashid Ali in the Iraq revolt. Gangs of Caucasian terrorists found shelter in Iran before the decisive action of Great Britain and Soviet Russia. They supped with the Mufti of Jerusalem. Their apparent insignificance made them an admirable tool of Nazi Germany.

This does not mean that every Caucasian emigrant is, or has been, a quisling. I refer only to those whose propaganda has been directed from Berlin. An example of such propaganda is provided on the opposite page. The imprint of Bruno Deuss, Berlin-Charlottenburg, insolently proclaims its origin.

ORGANIZATION

How do the Caucasian quislings fit into the pattern of German psychological warfare ?

Let us see what the Nazi Banse has to say on the subject of internal disruption. Banse, it will be remembered, published a book entitled ***The Role of Geography and People in the World War***. The Nazis themselves were disturbed by the book. They censored it and forbade its sale on the ground that it was "merely the senseless babblings of an irresponsible armchair strategist." What they meant was that they did not want anyone else to make sense out of Banse's "senseless babblings." He was told to be more careful the next time he put pen to paper. To console him for the ban on his book he was made Professor of Military Sciences at the Brunswick Institute of Technology. Here he was able to teach and expand his theories. One of them deserves quotation :

It is essential to attack the enemy nation at its weak spots (and what nation has not got its weak spots ?), to undermine and break down its resistance, and to convince it that it is being deceived, misled, and brought to destruction by its own Government. Thus the people will lose confidence in the justice of its cause so that the political opposition in those nations (and what nation is without one ?) will raise its head and become a more powerful troublemaker. The enemy nation's originally solid, powerful, and well-knit fabric must be gradually disintegrated, broken down, rotted, so that it falls apart like a fungus trodden upon in a forest.

Precisely. These tactics were applied to every nation in Europe. They failed notably in the case of Great Britain and the U.S.S.R. Those countries have evolved their own methods of dealing with the German virus.

A brief and by no means complete list is sufficient to show the thoroughness with which Banse's theory was

The Caucasian Quarterly

A periodical for the promotion of the idea of an independent confederated state of the Caucasian nations.

Editor : H. BAMMATE,
10, Rue Piolo, Paris (XV.)

Printed by Bruno Deuss, Berlin-Charlottenburg

The Title-page of a Caucasian Separatist Publication
The imprint is reproduced from a later page of the same issue.

studied. These organizations are nothing less than ancillaries of the German Intelligence Service :

Professor Haushofer's Working Community of Geopolitics at Munich, Heidelberg, and Berlin.

Academy of Foreign Politics, Berlin-Dahlem.

German Institute of Foreign Countries, Stuttgart.

Foreign Plitical Bureau of the Nazi Party, Munich and Berlin.

Foreign organization of the Nazi Party, Berlin and Hamburg.

Foundation of German activities abroad, Berlin.

Institute of Political Geography, Kroessinsee.

This list does not include those societies that deal exclusively with American and British problems.

METHODS

The Nazis have long applied themselves to the study of what they call comparative national psychology. They maintain that a nation's qualities, like an individual's, can be analysed, its virtues and vices appraised and exploited. Every nation in the world, and certainly those which are engaged in the struggle against Nazi Germany, have received this treatment. Not only is a general analysis made of what Americans, Russians, and Englishmen think about the war and about their leaders, but also how they react to disaster and to success. The character and attributes of their respective leaders are carefully studied.

It is noteworthy that the Nazi psychology has a healthy respect for the English character. They consider

Mr. Gladstone to be the 'typical Englishman,' and base their experiments on careful studies of his speeches, his private and public life. They do not, however, judge the Russians on the character of Peter the Great. In the opinion of the Nazis the Russians are "sentimental, melancholics, incapable of sustained will, tenacity, or decision." Something has clearly gone wrong with their psychological laboratory. Hitler must have ordered quite a number of his tame professors to swallow their books and break their magic wands.

PERSONNEL

Under this heading must be included not only the familiar tourist but also the ***politische Missionare***—the political missionaries—who cloak themselves in a hundred different guises: as travellers, business-men, or, as has recently been reported from New Guinea, as Lutheran priests. To this may be added the rumour mongers and accredited diplomats like von Papen, as well as Dr. Clodius's economic storm-troops.

Having established the methods and the personnel, we can move on to that fraternity of quislings which Hitler has held in reserve for so many years to use against the Soviet Union.

UKRAINIAN AND CAUCASIAN QUISLINGS

The 'Ukrainian problem'—a problem, of course, only in so far as Germany is concerned—is conveniently united by German geo-politicians with the 'Caucasian problem.' They are but two heads to the same spear.

The odd thing about the Ukrainian movement, however, is that it is peopled not by Ukrainians at all but by dissatisfied Galician and Polish Ukrainians whose affinities and history with the far larger Soviet Ukraine are flimsy indeed. The Galicians, for example, had for centuries endured Austrian rule. Many of them, certainly many among their leaders, have German political orientations. The Polish Ukrainians, we know, were a constant threat to the Polish State, and they were used by Hitler during the attack on Poland.

The Ukrainian Separatist movement is still under the nominal leadership of Hetman Skorapadsky. But Skorapadsky has grown old in tyranny. He had ruled the Ukraine for the Germans in 1918. Younger men like the emigrant General Biskupsky are the leading lights of to-day.

When Germany attacked the Soviet Union and succeeded in occupying large parts of the Ukraine the Ukrainian Separatists discovered that the promises made to them for the last ten years had not been fulfilled. It seems that the fierce resistance of the Soviet Ukraine and the guerrillas operating there disillusioned and exhausted the Fuhrer's patience. The Ukrainian Bureau in Berlin had constantly whispered—nay, shouted—that the Soviet Ukraine would rise as one man, bringing the traditional salt and bread, not to mention the garlands of wheat and cornflowers, with which to greet the Nazi liberators.

The failure of the Germans to honour their pledges to the Ukrainian traitors does not preclude the use of the Caucasian quislings at an opportune moment.

Indeed, even if the Caucasian Separatists were to be discarded in a moment of hypothetical victory the part they have already played in the Caucasus and the Middle East will have more than compensated for the large expenditure of treasure, time, and organization spent on them by the Nazis.

QUISLING AND VON SCHULENBURG

Quisling's 'humanitarian' expedition to Armenia in the year 1925 has already been noted. It need not surprise anyone that Quisling, unlike his chief, Dr. Nansen, interested himself in things other than the welfare of Armenian refugees. He filled his notebooks with details of such matters as mountain passes, coastal defences, and the nature of the terrain.

From 1922 to 1929 Quisling was the Norwegian Military Attache in Moscow. But he did not evince his open Fascist and pro-German sympathies until after the death of Dr. Nansen in 1930. One day, when the archives of the German Secret Service are published, the reader will hardly be surprised to learn that Quisling was the indispensable link between all pro-German elements hostile to the Soviet Union and his masters.

An even more important character enters the *dramatis personæ* of the Caucasus: Friedrich Werner Erdmann Mathias Johann Bernhard Erich, Graf von der Schulenburg. This many-Christian-named gentleman was from October 1934 to June 22, 1941, the German Ambassador to the Soviet Union.

His pate is bald, and dolorous but well-trimmed moustaches overhang the hard Prussian mouth. His familiarity with the Caucasus is exceptional. In 1911—

that is to say, before the Revolution--he was the German Vice-Consul in Tiflis. He was the lion of local society, the aristocrat, fluent with flattery, the spy with keen eyes and a keener memory. The contacts which he made with Russian and Caucasian nobility have, no doubt, stood him in good stead. Even in pre-war days he encouraged the Kaiser's Government to send tourists to the "Switzerland beside the sea." The Black Sea riviera and the mineral spas of Kislovodsk and Essentuki were famed for their fat, sweating Germans, sitting in hot spring baths or sipping the iron and sulphur waters of the Caucasus.

Tsarist police were innocently surprised when they discovered at the outbreak of war in 1914 that the dashing Vice-Consul had not let his social work interfere with the more practical activities of spying. Schulenburg revisited the Caucasus in May 1918. He was one of the Germans who were sent to defend the Menshevik Republic of Georgia from the Turks.

The following year found him the head of the Near Eastern Department of the German Foreign Office. A defeated and prostrate Germany still maintained a luxurious espionage system, Schulenburg commiserated and condoled with those Caucasians who were anxious to enlist German sympathy and assistance on their side against the Soviet regime.

In 1923 Schulenburg betook himself to Persia, near enough to the Caucasus to keep a watchful eye on the various *emigre* organizations that were springing up. His work completed, he was shifted to Rumania. But three years had barely passed when, on Hitler's instructions,

he was given the high post of German Ambassador to Moscow.

He arrived in 1934, speaking fluent Russian, and Georgian into the bargain, attractively aged and most sympathetic—privately, of course, since the Nazis had begun to fulminate against the Soviet Union very early in their governing career.

How much he had to do with the traitor Marshal Tukachevsky there is little evidence but much rumour. It is said that he betrayed the traitor generals in order to ingratiate himself with the Soviet Government. This is doubtful but not beyond the realms of possibility. The Germans had learned all they wanted from the rising Napoleons. They probably knew that the generals' activities were about to be discovered anyway. So they did some "honest brokerage"—in the traditional Bismarck style. The purge which followed was so thorough that it must have dismayed the Nazis.

HITLER LOOKS AT THE CAUCASUS

In 1936 the Fuhrer delivered himself of the following; "If the Urals and the Caucasus, with their incalculable wealth of raw materials, the rich forests of Siberia, and the unending cornfields of the Ukraine, were within the command of Germany under National Socialist leadership the country [Germany] would swim in fat."

This predilection for "swimming in fat" is an ancient dream of Germany's. But it has nowhere been admitted in such terms of barefaced piracy as this. The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk hoped to establish Germany's priority over the oilfields of Baku. For Hitler priorities are a prelude to pillage and nothing else. The Soviet-German Non-

aggression Pact in 1939 sunk no oil-wells for him. The Russians knew that treaties with the Nazis, to use an old Eastern proverb are "paper to wrap sweets in."

But between the attempt and the preparation for the attempt lie many years of ceaseless endeavour, of quisling-agitation, and propaganda. It is the purpose of this chapter to reveal these activities. It is too late to rethread old history. The crucial moment for an attack on the Caucasus and the Middle East draws near. The chapter offers a background and an explanation of forthcoming events.

CAUCASIAN QUISLINGS

Anti-Soviet agitation had been going on in Turkey and in the Middle East, directed largely from headquarters in Paris, for a considerable number of years before Hitler gained power in 1933. But the sudden appearance of luxury issues of a journal entitled *Kavkaz*, or *The Caucasian Quarterly*, indicated either a windfall or management by new and efficient hands.

Various political cells of Caucasian Separatists of different shades and alignments were already established throughout the Middle East. But in January 1934, almost within a year of Hitler's triumph in Germany, a flutter of literature descended from the dovecots of 10 Rue Piolo, Paris. The purpose of this specific publication was, so those who obtained and read it were informed, "the liberation of the Caucasus from foreign domination and the creation of an independent Caucasian state on the basis of a confederation of Caucasian peoples."

This patriotic bow-string, *The Caucasian Quarterly*, was, however, to loose many other arrows besides those of pure patriotism. It went even further than other publications such as the *Prometheus*, an organ which described itself as the voice of the oppressed nationalities of the Caucasus, the Ukraine, and Turkestan.

The German-printed *Kavkaz* conducted a campaign of vilification not only against the Soviet Union but against the democracies in general. The tactics were often cumbersome and obscure. But for that very reason they were calculated to appeal to people whose fear of Bolshevism frequently exceeded their fear of German, Italian, and Japanese Fascism. More than that. The hot-headed rhetoric and lies were cooked according to the best recipes of their song of songs, Hitler's *Mein Kampf*. As such, it fed the ever-growing stream of anti Russian and anti-British propaganda in the Middle East which fanned the Arab disturbances in Palestine, sowed the seeds of the Iraq revolt of Rashid Ali, and generally assisted German Fifth Columnism in Iran.

THE GOOD WORK BEGINS

In 1937, however, all pretence of a Paris office was discarded. The editor, H. Bammate, and his crew found larger and no doubt more comfortable premises in Berlin. The address was : Berlin W. 50, Rankestrasse 6.

By confining ourselves to a few quotations from the propaganda organs of the Caucasian quislings, we will see just how the Nazi machine was employing its Caucasian dupes. Orders were given to eulogize the war of 1914-18 thus :

> Conquering Germany put on her feet the unwilling subject people in Russia, created new national states, etc. The just and brilliant idea of the Germans—to free the peoples from the Russian yoke—sank deeply into the consciousness of these peoples.....As long as Russia is not dismembered, as long as the peoples inhabiting Russia and making up 50 per cent. of the population do not create their own State life, and as long as Russia is not confined within her ethnographic frontiers, there will be no peace either for Europe, Asia, or mankind. The hydra must be utterly crushed by the dismemberment of Russia and the creation of new national states.

Then the Caucasian quislings went a step farther, revealing their political mentality in no uncertain terms: "Everywhere the national principle is asserting itself. National Socialism and Fascism have initiated a new epoch in the history of mankind."

The chorus was, of course, picked up by the German Press. The *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* of April 13, 1938, praised the German edition of *Der Kaukasus*:

> In connexion with the fight against Bolshevism, the Caucasian problem—the dream of the Caucasian peoples to found an independent federal state—has become of the utmost significance. . . . The group that brings out this paper approaches these difficult problems with a correct realization of the great responsibility they entail—as every one should who realizes the lawfulness of this aim: the aim of these ancient cultured nations to achieve political freedom.
>
> This review is for all those who know something of the problems with which it is concerned, and all those who wage war on Bolshevism.

By this time editions in almost every European and Oriental language were being published. A formal unity was proclaimed between the aspirations of the Ukrainian Separatists and the Caucasian Fascist organization;

> The resurrection of the Ukrainian people is at hand, and no power on earth can prevent it. . . . We want them [Ukrainian Separatists] to feel convinced that the thoughts and feelings of all patriotic Caucasians at home and abroad are identical with those of the heroic fighters for an Independent Ukraine. . . . The fight for the liberation of the Ukraine will be the forerunner of the fight for Caucasian freedom.

MUNICH AND THE CAUCASIAN SEPARATISTS

A yelp of triumph went up from the propaganda bureau of the Caucasian and Ukrainian Separatists when the Soviet Union was excluded from the Munich Conference in 1938. They began straining at their leash.

> As far as the Ukraine is concerned, the Soviets will undoubtedly have to fight for it. But will other people fight for the Ukraine—and for Soviet Russia? Everything depends on the correct answer to that question. And the Sudeten German precedent has given us much food for thought.

Nothing, of course, was said of the aim "of these ancient cultured nations to achieve political freedom" when that political freedom referred to Austria and Czechoslovakia. Quite the contrary. Nazi Germany's ***Friedensliebe***—peace-lovingness—was explained in the following fashion:

> Disputes among nations can never be eliminated. But to preach collective security is the most effective means of turning them into world-wide calamities. War is one of the forms in which the struggle for existence among the nations manifests itself. It is better to allow an unjustified or unjustifiable attack to succeed here or there than to increase the scope of the conflict by taking sides in it.

GHENGIS KHAN'S EMPIRE

Orders came from the German Propaganda Ministry to play up the appearance of a new kind of political

geometry in the shape of the Berlin-Rome Axis and the Tokyo-Berlin-Rome triangle. Germany was wooing Japan, and the Caucasian Separatists toiled unremittingly in their propaganda not only among their followers, but among their reading public in the Middle East. They set out to explain the "high civilizing mission of Nippon."

Remarkable statements such as this appeared. The simple Persian and Iraqi, and not so simple Turk were informed that :

> The rebirth of Ghengis Khan's Empire is the greatest event in history, for which the Turanian-Turik world is indebted to the courageous protection of the Japanese Emperor's army. . . . In this case Japanese Pan-Turanianism is performing historical mission in favour of the peoples of Asia. . . .

But as if the promise of the rebirth of Ghengis Khan's Empire was not enough another line was adopted :

> While speaking of Japanese-Russian rivalry, it is necessary to make clear that terminology. While Moscow aims at the creation in China of such premises as would ensure her hegemony over the whole world Japan only protects herself, and, of course, the victory of Japan means also the safeguarding of the Christian civilization.

Knowing the power of subtle inversion, Japan invoked "Yellow Terror" to terrify Europe. Japan's mission, it appears, was to save Christian civilization from the Yellow Peril ! The European editions of the *Caucasian Quarterly* carried this gem of information : "At the same time they [the Japanese] will crumble down the possibility of an invasion of Europe by 400 million yellow people under the *ægis* of Moscow."

Out of this hotch-potch of nonsense another theme became apparent. There was a period when the German propaganda machine and its satellites spared no pains

in holding up the policy of appeasement as one "which promised to make a careful analysis of the aims of the Japanese action in China." Mr. Chamberlain "had given," it was said, "the English policy a new course, or, more exactly, returned it to its traditional principles."

To discover terms of agreement with Japan would help "to bar the road to Russian Communist expansion, the successful results of which will be so great for the whole of mankind that it is even difficult to realize them now."

Were there any greater horizons of absurdity left to conquer? Why, yes. They even stumbled to that prince of poets, Goethe. Even he was quoted to prove the inestimable benefit that the world would derive from the dismemberment of the Soviet Union. Had he not dreamed of a Rhine Dor Canal? Goethe, the humanist, the European, the man who foresaw the abolition of national frontiers, had said in 1827, "I may live to see the opening of the Panama and Suez Canals. And it will be worth it. I should like to live till the Rhine and the Don have been linked together." But—and this is important—he also said, ". . . although that would require efforts that are beyond the strength of Germany alone."

The Caucasian quislings did not think so. Germany, the provider of all good things for them, had in Goethe's time been a kingdom divided within itself into hosts of principalities. Now, a united Germany, a Germany of Hitler and National Socialism, could make this gigantic waterway a feasible proposition. Nor was Italy to be left out. The Black Sea littoral, which had once belonged to the ancient Roman Empire, was to be the living-space

of countless Italian *bambini*. 'We live in an age of electricity, wireless, and aviation," the *Caucasian Quarterly* of the first part of 1938 proclaimed ecstatically. "That which went forward at the pace of a snail now tears along at mercurial speed. The Rhine-Don-Black Sea Canal and the Caucasus will be the bridge between Europe and Asia, and joining all this to the Far East." Thus were the new masters of the world to divide their Fascist inheritance.

But if all these airy dreams and spoutings seemed to have no basis in reality the Caucasian Separatists used political acumen and strategy to disturb the friendly relationship between the Soviet Union and the Turkish Republic. Action took the place of talk. Hitler had work of vital importance for the Caucasian quislings to do in Turkey.

TURKEY AND THE CAUCASIAN SEPARATISTS

Between the years 1934 and 1938 Turkey became the principal theatre of Caucasian Separatist operations. There were three reasons for this : Turkey lies adjacent to the Caucasus ; a number of Caucasian peoples have kinship with the Turks ; the Soviet Union and Turkey enjoyed friendly relations for nearly two decades.

The programme of the Separatists was therefore threefold : to use Turkey as a base for their Middle Eastern operations ; to poison the atmosphere between the Soviet Union and Turkey ; and to prepare an atmosphere amenable to German pressure.

Up to 1934 there existed in Turkey, especially in the principal towns, large coteries of emigrant Caucasians of different races and tongues. They had found it diffi-

cult enough to work together in their own native land. They found co-operation harder still in exile. But with the arrival of funds Hitler's gold proved a remarkable cement.

Turkish opinion was fed in increasing doses on the idea that a Caucasian Confederacy

> inspired by her unshakable will to defend her independence against all attempts from outside is for Turkey the ideal solution of her acutest problem – that of the defence of the national frontiers from the menace mathematically inevitable in the more or less near future of Russian aggression.

Of course, this needed some explanation. Kemal Ataturk was alive, and Kemal Ataturk nurtured no fancies about "the menace mathematically inevitable . . . of Russian aggression." Quite the contrary. He and the Soviet Government realized only too clearly from what quarter aggression might come.

The propagandists simulated patience. Admittedly there was friendship between Turkey and the Soviet Union, they said. But this was an "unnatural connexion —in spite of its relatively prolonged character . . . which must be considered an accidental and temporary episode brought about by the Great War, the Revolution, and the isolation of both countries from Europe."

In an attempt to give a feasible explanation it was suggested that England was still suspicious of Moscow's interests in the Bosporus Straits "England, in fact, was returning, as regards the Near East, to the old tried policy of Beaconsfield." The geo-politicians in Berlin were evidently not content with disinterring Mr. Gladstone. They were equally capable of resurrecting his rival, Disraeli.

Of course, German propaganda and the Separatists had a healthy respect for the character of Kemal. They did not blame him for his friendship with the Soviet Union—far from it. They understood how inevitable it was when Turkey was without friends in Europe. They sympathized in the following fashion :

> There is an old Turkish saying, "A drowning man will catch at a snake." There was a tragic moment in the history of Turkey when she was forced to hold on to the Red Snake. This policy had its results. It must in justice be said that the results were excellent for Turkey.
>
> The now strengthened and new Turkey holds a notable place in the European conclave. She has her allies and powerful friends. Her need of the Muscovite snake grows less and less. We think the day is near when she will have no need of it at all.
>
> We await that day.

Now, of course, such tactics cancelled themselves out. Kemal could not have been right and wrong at the same time. Nor was he showing any evidence of recognizing "allies and powerful friends," typified by one he so rudely called the "inflated bullfrog of the Pontine Marshes," let alone the Berchtesgaden Aphrodite.

There were, of course, certain elements in Turkey filled with vague Pan-Turanian longings. It was to this section that German propaganda next turned.

Kantemir, the leader of the Caucasian Separatists in Turkey, began hinting that the Caucasian Confederacy would be happy under Turkish rule, "although, of course, it was not a question of seeking a new ruler." Turkey would be a friend. It would be a platonic federation. He even offered to surrender Batum to the Turks.

"We must wait," said Bammate, "until the situation

and Turkey's vital interests—never divorced from ours—cause her leader to play his hand as we would have it. That day is not yet, but it will come."

This bribery was accompanied by wordy agitation of a 'Greater Turkey.' The advocates were not Turks. But that did not deter Kantemir from proclaiming that since eighteen million people lived in Soviet Turkestan, and they were undeniably of Turkish origin, it might also be a good idea if Turkey took them under her protection.

A notable Turkish journalist quickly scotched this crusade. He characterized it in the *Istanbul Son Posta* as "flagrant, Pan-Turkish racialism, snowy *halva*,[1]" and accused Germany of being guided "not so much by sincere sympathies for the peoples of the Turkish race as by the desire to weaken Russia." Kemal's Turkey was not prepared to accept Fascist racialism just to oblige the Caucasians, and to fall into the German trap.

Kemal had proclaimed that the policy of Turkey was based on equality and mutual esteem between nations. But Caucasian propaganda would have none of it. "But it is just this which pleases us," they wrote, "this presence of egotistical interestedness of outside powers in the realization of our national ideal gives us one of the most convincing guarantees of the approaching triumph of our just cause."

KEMAL STRIKES

Further evidence of German connivance in Caucasian propaganda was hardly needed. Given enough rope, these Caucasian propagandists had hung themselves on the swastika lanyard. Kemal struck with characteristic

1 A sweetmeat very popular throughout the Middle East.

swiftness. The official organ of the Turkish Government, the *Remis Gazeta*, of September 24, 1938, announced :

> It having been ascertained that an attempt is made to use our country as the base for a propaganda and for a revolutionary intelligence service directed against a friendly country and in favour and at the instigation of a third country, the Council of Ministers acting in response to proposals submitted by the Minister of the Interior, has resolved to deprive the following persons of their Turkish citizenship and to expel them from this country :
>
> Alikhan Kantemir, Memet Halil Gurgoren, the railway manager, Mir Ali, Abbas oglu Sefer, Memet Tugai, the ex-President of the Turkestanian Republic, Osman Kodsha oglu, Kjasim oglu Abbas, and Osman Gube.

This announcement bore the signatures of Ataturk and the whole Council of Ministers. Two hours later these Nazi agents, self-styled martyrs and patriots, were bundled into a train and deported. Rage filled their hearts when they saw that the Soviet Consul at Istanbul was standing on the platform to give them a send off.

RIFTS IN THE LUTE

A few days later Alikhan Kantemir arrived in Berlin to join his other colleagues. The last splutter from the Separatists in Turkey was to make a weak protest against the expulsion. The submission had no doubt been ordained by the German Intelligence Service.

It is significant that one of the deportees, Abbas oglu Sefer, describing himself as a "peaceful merchant," was an Iranian, or Persian, subject.

The political fortunes of the Caucasian Separatists suffered considerably by the expulsion of their leaders from Turkey. But there were other centres where they

could be employed, if was decided. They had already given covert aid to Nazi plans in Syria and Palestine. Their bilinguism and racial affinity with races of the Middle East made it very difficult to detect the origin of German propaganda.

Nevertheless, severe criticisms were levelled against them in the very nests in which they had hoped to lay their dynamite. The Armenian Dashnak organizations, for example, in America, Egypt, and Syria, as well as Turkey, were offended by their affected Pan-Turanianism. Only a small minority of Armenian Fascists (not to be confused with the 'Liberal' Dashnaks) joined the Separatists in 1933.

On the other hand, Dashnak Armenians, opposed as they were to Soviet power, made overt references to the luxurious editions which the Caucasian Separatists were able to put out. They wanted to know who was the real power behind them. In fact, the extremism of the Caucasian Separatists aroused the deepest anxiety in Armenian *emigre* circles. In answer to Separatist pleas for unity they said

> that the Armenians are quite capable to judge for themselves, and they quite realize that of all the political regimes in Russia the Soviet regime is the one which accords the most loyal recognition to the rights of the nationalities, including the smallest and feeblest, so that they will not be in the least inclined to be anti-Russian.

Perhaps the Dashnaks had learned, no matter how late, the meaning of Caucasian unity as typified in the three Soviet republics. In any case, Mr G. M. Missakian, the representative of the Armenian Dashnak Party in Great Britain, has made it known to the Press that "the Armenians

throughout the whole world are pledged wholeheartedly to the Allied cause They are anxious and willing to fight to-day as they did in the last war by the side of Great Britain."

IRAQ AND PERSIA

There is little direct evidence to suggest that the Caucasian Separatists played a large part in the Iraq revolt of April 1941. But there can be no doubt that they had served here as the apostles of German Fascism. They were so effectively camouflaged under different nationalities and had been absorbed so much into the national life as clerks, administrators, army officers, that it is profitless to sort them out. It is merely necessary to point to their influence.

In Persia the activities of the Separatists were more open. We have already noticed the "peaceful Persian merchant," Abbas oglu Sefer. In the face of such evidence no surprise need be occasioned by the Soviet note to Persia on August 25, 1941. It recorded a breach of Article 6 of the Treaty signed in 1921 in which the two contracting parties agreed that :

> in the event of attempts by a third party to carry out, by means of armed intervention, a policy of conquest of Iranian territory or to turn Iranian territory into a military base for action against Russia, then, if the frontiers of the U.S.S.R. or her allies are faced with danger the Soviet Government will have the right to march troops into Iranian territory and to take the necessary military measures in the interests of self-defence. . . .

The note named a number of notorious German agents, such as Kamota, Meyer, von Rodanovich, and others, and accused them of organizing "terrorist groups in the province of Azerbaijan, especially in the chief

Soviet oil-centre at Baku." There is no doubt that many of the guides and dynamiters were members of the Caucasian Separatist organization.

The danger has, of course, been considerably lessened by the energetic action taken by the British Government in Iraq and, in conjunction with the Soviet Union, in Persia.

To quote a dissident opinion, however, Mr. V. V. Tilea, former Rumanian Minister in London, wrote in the *Sunday Times* of September 28, 1941, that in his opinion :

> The Nazis still have in the Caucasus region three well-prepared nests of trouble, on which they have worked with the help of *emigre* leaders from those countries, who in the last twenty years have continuously been secretly preparing for political revolt, and have secretly sent army equipment to their co-nationals. For Azerbaijan, they have their former leader, Rasul Zadeh, for the northern Caucasus, M. Shamil, and for Georgia, the former President Geordania [Jordania] and his collaborator Cenkahli.

In my opinion this is an exaggerated view. Mr. Tilea goes on to say in the same article : " But we should not forget that the Caucasus and its nations could be brought to a state of effervescence so that an unpleasant surprise might come there for Russia either from the inside or, may be, from Iran."

The menace from Iran has been removed. To suggest that the Caucasus and its nations " could be brought to a state of effervescence" is to overrate the success of German propaganda inside the Soviet Union. As to the bankrupt political leadership of the men quoted by Mr. Tilea, it has no following whatsoever in the Caucasus. What can the Caucasian quislings offer that the Caucasus has not got already ? Who does not know that

behind their thin oriflammes, their wordy devotion, stands their 'protector,' Nazi Germany?

Twenty years is a long time, especially if measured in terms of progress. The occupation of parts of the Soviet Union by the Nazi forces has produced no effervescence whatsoever. Quite the contrary. Soviet Ukrainians are in the forefront of the guerrilla fighters. There are no quislings, no collaborationists. German attempts to stir up racial hatred and anti-Semitism have failed miserably. One may contrast this state of affairs with the comparative ease with which the Nazis have been able to stir up Rumanian and Hungarian enmity, not to mention Bulgar and Greek hatred.

The Caucasian people have found a century of lost patriotism in unity and friendship. In unity they have striven to build up their economic and cultural lives. They have taken their hands off the fratricidal dagger. They have mingled their songs. They have grown to know and understand each other. As they have lived, so they will fight, in unity, with the same reckless bravery and endurance that has characterized them throughout the ages.

Chapter XII

PRELUDE OR POSTSCRIPT ?

This chapter is written in the atmosphere of zero hour. A long and bitter winter has made way for spring, and the April Ides have come and nearly gone. Minds, mesmerized by the spring offensive, begin to wonder whether Hitler has abandoned or postponed his favourite, and for the past two years seasonal, offensive. The Red Army with relentless skill and courage has provided no respite for German arms. The air offensive in the West has moved steadily to its zenith. The promise of more grievous blows against the Nazis is on everybody's lips. There is no need for any political sundial to warn us that it is later than we think. There are no more comfortable time-tables to be upset. The cumbersome prophecy of a turning-point some time in 1943 or 1944 has been slowly but decisively abandoned.

Axis strategy, held up at one end on Soviet soil, is balanced at the other end by the Japanese threat to India. The greatest pincer movement in history is about to be effected. The question is who shall pinch whom? Will the Allies attack to frustrate an attack, or will they sit behind their barricades and wait for an invasion of the Caucasus or the British Isles or Turkey, Suez, or Syria? Only those responsible for our strategy can supply that answer. Forces are being husbanded; the lethal weapons of factories have been stacked. Since,

however, the Caucasus is the primary concern of this book, and we have postulated that an attack on the Caucasus is bound to come unless the Nazis are driven into defensive action and switch their carefully prepared forces to meet this menace, we must, even at the risk of bias, view their offensive strategy and isolate those areas which would directly or indirectly be the scene of their next full-scale attack.

It is possible that even before this book goes to press the reader may well smile at the author's inaccurate prescience. So much the better. For if the Nazis are compelled to give up the assault on the Caucasus and the Middle East the Allies will have won a decisive victory against the Axis.

At the risk of repeating the first chapter of this book, let us list the advantages that Germany would derive from an attack on the Caucasus and the Middle East:

(1) Principal target—oil. Germany would at a stroke deprive the Red Army and Soviet economy of its main supply of motor fuel.

(2) Strategic target—by the seizure of the Caucasus Germany would automatically cut off British and American supplies going to the Soviet Union via the Persian Gulf

(3) The control of the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea would establish a base for an attack on India, where Axis long-term strategy decrees that Aryans and Honorary Aryans shall meet. This meeting between Germany and Japan would enable Germany to share in the rubber and tin of Malaya

and the Dutch East Indies, and, in return, provide Japan with the commodities she lacks—steel and ore.

To rip strategy out of its context of political, economic, and geographical considerations is, of course, absurd. Will Hitler be able to persuade the Japanese to form a second front against the Soviet Union in the Far East? The predatory instincts of Fascism of whatever race and continent run fairly true to form. Japan wants no partner to share her Asiatic Co-prosperity Sphere. While the noonday sun shines high above her she will feather Hitler's nest with promises, but with little else. Burglars very rarely share their swag except under the duress of blackmail, and Hitler is in no position to blackmail Japan. If things go ill with him in Europe it is quite conceivable that the "Yellow Peril" may be taken out of the Kaiser's dusty archives and used as a peace threat. But the Arch Anarch, who has himself dealt so long in chaos, must look to his own victories and, should they fail, must perish. Only if Japan is frustrated or severely threatened with defeat herself will she co-operate in helping Hitler to become the master of the world.

GERMANY DEMANDS A SECOND FRONT

Whether the Japanese attack the Far Eastern provinces of the Soviet Union or not, Hitler's final victory depends upon the outcome of this year's campaign in the Soviet Union and Middle East.

So far every major campaign that the Germans have fought has been characterized by a sudden attack in the enemy's flank. The German armies to date, despite their deep advances into Soviet territory, have been

unable to create a flanking or enveloping movement. The tactical advantage of an attack on the Caucasus is that it would create a second front against the Soviet Union and permit the very kind of flanking movement that is so strongly beloved of German tacticians.

Four routes lead to the Caucasus, none of them easy. Before examining their respective advantages and disadvantages, we may list the four approaches as follows :

(1) The northern route via Rostov (of unhappy memory) into the North Caucasus, branching off to Baku and Batum.

(2) By land through Turkey.

(3) Across 750 miles of sea from the invasion bases in Bulgaria and Rumania.

(4) The south-western route Approach from the direction of Syria or Palestine, thence to Iraq, Northern Persia, and into Soviet Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Hitler may use all the four routes simultaneously or a combination of two or three or even concentrate on a single route. Some of the attacks may be bluff to cover up the more important engagements. It is worth while therefore to consider the independent merits of each one of these lines of attack.

ROSTOV—BACK TO A GRAVEYARD ?

The columns of the *Voelkische Beobachter* and the *Schwarze Korps* were black with crosses a few days after the German disaster of Rostov in December 1941, but Hitler is a vegetarian only as far as his palate and not his conscience is concerned.

At the height of the autumn offensive the Germans were boosting the Hoffmann Plan, which prescribed a straight drive through to the Caucasus. The defeat at Rostav, the Soviet landing on the Kerch Peninsula, and the defence of that "Tobruk of the Crimea," Sebastopol, together with a winter campaign, upset the Hoffmann Plan. It is questionable whether the "knife through butter" conquest prescribed by the plan will be attempted again. The massing of German armies on the southern front is counterbalanced by Soviet concentrations. In such circumstances a drive through to the Caucasus must presuppose the complete annihilation of this southern Red Army, a difficulty which the Germans will not be able to explain away by reasons of seasonal fluctuations of frost and thaw and summer dust.

Everything suggests that the Germans will, in fact, launch a fairly large offensive in the south as soon as their preparations allow. But this offensive will probably be of an exploratory nature, to test Russian reserves and defences.

Even a successful break-through by the German Army would in itself constitute a danger. The Germans would be forced to lengthen their flank and risk being struck in the rear by armies they had left intact. The dilemma facing the Nazis, therefore, is whether to order a general offensive along the whole two-thousand mile front and so engage in protracted warfare, or to throw their full strength on to the southern front in the hope of winning a stunning victory.

Another alternative exists, not so attractive as the capture of the oil-wells, but one which may be considered

less risky. The object would be to recapture Rostov and drive due east to Stalingrad and Astrakhan on the Caspian Sea. This stroke, although it would leave the Caucasus intact, would cut off the most favourable oil route supplying the Red Army, as well as reduce the importance of the 'Persia Road.' Oil would have to go by a circuitous route, shipped to the port of Krasnovodsk facing Baku, and thence on a journey of nearly two thousand miles to Kuibishev and the Urals.

This question of oil and supply routes is very important. Only a direct occupation of the Caucasus could threaten the Baku-Krasnovodsk route. But what if the Persia Road was put out of action as the result of a successful attack in the Middle East? Would that mean that *all* Allied reinforcements would have to reach the Soviet Union via the northern port of Murmansk?

Recently an experimental assignment of jute and lead went from India. It travelled via Karachi to Quetta, over the Persian border to Duzdap by rail; from Duzdap it was carried by road to Meshed across the Soviet Persian border to Merv, from where it was transported again by rail into the interior. This route is extremely lengthy. But its potentialities in the event of the capture of Astrakhan must not be overlooked.

There is another but still more difficult connecting link between the Allies and the Soviet Union—across Afghanistan. This route may have been considered hazardous before the expulsion of German 'tourists and technicians' from that country. A road will have to be blasted out of the mountains to connect Herat, in Afghanistan, with Kushk, the border terminus in Soviet

Turkestan. But men imbued with the spirit of the builders of the Burma Road have taught us to laugh at mountains. Besides, there are some thousands of Italian prisoners in India, reputed to be among the best road-builders in the world. They may be employed to earn liberty for themselves and so indirectly hasten the emancipation of their own country from the Nazi-Fascist yoke.

THE SWITZERLAND OF ASIA

Few countries, if any, have a record as clean and honourable in their dealings with foreign states as Turkey.

The fact that the Nazis now stand before the gates of Adrianople is not the fault of the Turks. They signed enough pacts with their Balkan neighbours to show their consistent goodwill. Had Kemal's advice and leadership been followed by these small states, and had he received the economic support from democracies, the Germans would not have been able to perpetrate those trade swindles which subjugated the economic and, through it, the political life of Turkey's Balkan neighbours.

Never once did the Turks seek to make capital out of Europe's misfortunes. When Italy baited the League of Nations over Abyssinia and Hitler marched into the Rhineland Turkey could have easily broken her word and abrogated the promise she made at Lausanne in 1923 not to fortify the Dardanelles. Instead, Kemal and his Prime Minister Inonu (President to-day) rejected robber tactics and sought redress at the Conference at Montreux. No cry of "oppressed brethren" went up when they asked France for the return of Alexandretta,

Studiously, but with dignity, Turkey maintained good relations with Germany. Two years before Montreux Mussolini had declared that the Near East was one of Italy's "historic objectives." The Dodecanese, the "Privileged Isles," once under Turkish rule, had become a springboard for Italian aspirations. The Duce said his statement had been misconstrued, but Kemal knew that Asia Minor figured large in Mussolini's Roman dream. These facts are mentioned only to show that the Axis has always considered Asia Minor in their sphere of interest. The Mare Nostrum is to be ringed with Italian possessions. Hitler granted that to his comrade when he was still flirting with him in Venice.

Turkey repudiates any belief in a threat to her independence. Such is the language of neutrality. Yet she has been mobilized for many months. Since September 13, 1940, the export of wheat, barley, and maize has been forbidden. She has been building up her basic war stocks. She has received arms from Britain and from America under the Lease and Lend Act. It will therefore be understood that her policy of neutrality springs not from some Maginot Line complex, faith in concrete, or the changing fortunes of war. But there are circumstances beyond her control. She cannot escape her geographical position; she cannot avoid being the corner-stone of the Near East.

Barely a week passes without there being some suggestion in the Press that an attack on Turkey is imminent. She has balanced on the edge of an abyss; she has cried, "I will fight the aggressor from whatever quarter he may come." But we must consider an interesting point.

Had Turkey's nerves been less strong, had her will to peace been less ardent, had the goal of national reconstruction promoted by Kemal been forgotten, Turkey might well have been drawn into the enemy's camp.

In the last Great War Turkey stood on Germany's side. The role she played in that calamity must never be under-estimated. She provided a second front against Russia in the Caucasus, and held down the large Russian army that could well have been employed elsewhere. As mistress of the Dardanelles, she opened the Black Sea to German battleships. The Turks—"the best natural soldiers in the world," as Lawrence of Arabia called them—were stubborn opponents in Syria, Palestine, and Iraq ; their defence of Gallipoli is memorable. Hitlerite Germany, unlike the Kaiser's Germany, began her attack on the Soviet Union with this great strategic disadvantage. It is hardly remarkable, therefore, that Hitler has sought to redress this balance by an intensive propaganda drive. He has held up the spectacle of his victories, he has shown Turkish diplomats his horror films. Turkey has met this silent offensive unflinchingly. She has fought and resisted more successfully and bravely than the Bulgarian and Rumanian Governments.

So far Nazi Germany has paid lip service to Turkey's interests. She has kept her requests within the bounds of diplomatic decorum. Moreover, she has not been able to turn trade with Turkey into a political bludgeon. True, Turkey's trade with Germany increased from 19 per cent. in 1933 to 51 per cent. in 1936. Recently an offer was made to construct an arms factory in return

for 3550 tons of chrome. Turkey produces about a quarter of the world's output. The German demand was calculated to upset the chrome agreement between Britain and Turkey. The Turks refused the German offer. Nevertheless, a new trade agreement has been signed with the Nazis. But little has so far come of it, because of the demolition of bridges and railways across the Maritza river during the German offensive in the Balkans last year. After an inexplicable length of time these have been repaired.

On the other hand, Britain has sent aircraft, locomotives, rolling stock, chemicals, heavy machinery, copper, and cotton. The Soviet Union, despite great demands made on her oil production, has found it possible to send petroleum to Turkey. America has supplied howitzers and other arms. It is doubtful whether Germany will be able to compete. Her economic offensive is part and parcel of her war of nerves. It permits many business-men, engineers, and cultural tourists to decorate the hotels in Ankara. So far, Turkey has refused to sign a 'cultural agreement.' At second best, the Germans have sent a certain General Gur to open a portrait gallery of all the German generals who served in Turkey, which is being set up at the German Embassy (*The Times*, April 22, 1942).

THE TALISMAN OF PEACE

The most formidable weapon in Hitler's political armoury is Franz von Papen.

It was flattering to Turkey, but certainly alarming, that Hitler considered her of such importance as to send von Papen hot from his conspiracies which led to the

fall of Austria, as Ambassador to Ankara in 1938 Papen is not an individual but an institution with more than a quarter of a century's experience in lying and double-dealing behind him. Papen has unique qualities; otherwise it is difficult to understand how he was spared during the "night of the long knives" when Hitler shot up his cronies and Papen's friends in June 1934.

His reception in Ankara was frigid but polite. But that did not disturb Papen's ostentatious good-will. By dint of hard work, much patience, and a remarkable resilience he learned from his early mistakes. He ceased irritating the Turks with internal intrigue and managed to gather a small but powerful pro-German clique—remnants, no doubt, of sympathizers of the Caucasian quislings and their Pan-Turanian programme. Further, it was inevitable that he should share the reflected glory won by German arms in France and South-eastern Europe.

But his most remarkable achievements to date are the 'canards' he has sought out and spread in order to disrupt Turkish-Soviet relations. For example, Papen, even when Germany made a profession of Soviet friendship and neutrality, let it be known that a secret agreement had been signed or certainly discussed between the Soviet Union and Germany for the ultimate partition of Turkey. This rumour coincided with the passing of Bessarabia and Bukovina to Soviet control. This malicious story was exploded by an exchange of notes between the Soviet Union and Turkey. On March 23, 1941, three months before the German attack

on the Soviet Union, the following communique was published in Istanbul and Ankara :

> After news had appeared in the foreign Press to the effect that if Turkey were involved in war the Soviet Union would take advantage of the difficulties she [Turkey] would have to face to attack her in turn, the Soviet Government have informed Turkey in this connexion :
>
> (1) Such news does not in any way coincide with the attitude of the Soviet Government.
>
> (2) In case Turkey should resist aggression and should find herself forced into war for the defence of her territory, Turkey could then, in conformity with the non-Aggression Pact existing between her and the U.S.S.R., count on the complete understanding and neutrality of the U.S.S.R.
>
> The Turkish Government has expressed to the Soviet Government its most sincere thanks for the declaration and has let it be known that should the U.S.S.R. find itself in a similar situation it could count on the complete understanding and neutrality of Turkey.

This example of German perfidy deceived neither the Turkish nor the Soviet Government, and von Papen hastened to throw the responsibility for this rumour on to British shoulders !

Having failed to shake Turkish trust in the Soviet Union, von Papen reversed his plan. German diplomats in Moscow were instructed to whisper that Turkey had signed a secret agreement permitting the British to establish bases in Turkey from where bombardment of the Baku oilfields could be undertaken in the event of war arising out of the Soviet-Finnish conflict.

These are but two examples of von Papen's diplomatic activities before the attack on the Soviet Union. As recently as last March he revealed that the British Government had agreed to the seizure of the Dardanelles

by the Soviet Union. This story so disturbed Turkish circles that Mr. Eden, the Foreign Secretary, found it necessary to issue a denial in the House of Commons. German propaganda, however, feeds on denials. The seed, once sown, is difficult to uproot. Nor have von Papen's activities been directed to the disruption of friendly feelings between the Soviet Union, Great Britain, and Turkey alone. According to ***The Times*** of March 29, 1942 :

ANKARA

Intense resentment has been caused here by a map of the "New Europe" published by *Yeni Dunya*, a publication in the Turkish language issued in Germany by the Propaganda Department of the Wehrmacht. The map shows Thrace, the Straits, and Istanbul as all belonging to Bulgaria.

Even pro-German elements are stated to be furious at this "incredible blunder" on the part of a newspaper which has already been banned here.

This was by no means an "incredible blunder." If it is a blunder at all it is of the intentional variety. When Hitler stumbles and lets it be known that he has stumbled he does so for a very good reason. Coinciding with this publication came the rumour that Turkey would shortly be asked to join the New Order. But more than Bulgaria's historic appetite is needed to scare the Turks.

At the same time von Papen is posing as Turkey's "Talisman of Peace." This myth is sedulously propagated, and a considerable section of Turkish public opinion feels that he can act as a deterring and modifying element in the Fuhrer's hot-headed councils. Goering, it will be remembered, was built up for a similar role during the 'phoney war' period which led to the collapse of France.

The average Turk, however, endorses his Government's attitude of complete neutrality. German winter reverses and the delay in their spring offensive have rubbed some gilt off the Talisman of Peace. Turkey fights desperately for her neutrality. She wants peace, but is not afraid of war.

EXPLOSIONS A LA PAPEN

On February 24, 1942, his Excellency the German Ambassador in Ankara decided to take his morning constitutional. He was accompanied by Frau von Papen. There could be nothing more innocent than a man walking out with his wife! Von Papen himself was in excellent spirits. The Talisman of Peace was smiling, although Turkish journalists reported that he seemed a little nervous, a little fidgety perhaps.

Suddenly, as he was passing the Ataturk Boulevard, a bomb exploded. Such an affair in a neutral country is to be regretted. Since the assailant himself was killed by the explosion, Turkish justice had the unenviable task of discovering the accomplice or accomplices of the outrage.

An innocent bystander may well wonder who would be the ultimate legatee to benefit by a bomb explosion in the Turkish capital, sufficiently near to the German Ambassador to mark him out as the intended victim, yet far enough only to knock him down and singe his wife's clothes—as Papen himself submitted in a subsequent deposition placed before the investigating magistrates.

Without waiting for the Turkish authorities to discover the perpetrators of the attack, the Berlin wireless and

other German-controlled European stations unhesitatingly tried and convicted the Soviet Union.

The arrest by the Turkish Police of two Soviet citizens in the employ of the Soviet Embassy in Ankara has naturally provided German propaganda with all the combustibles needed to set alight a fire twice the size of the Reichstag conflagration.

Turkey has every right to arrest and question anyone she pleases. Turkey's anxiety to find the real culprits is obvious, and Turkish justice will maintain its high traditions. The trial has, however, already revealed a number of glaring discrepancies, especially in the statements made by two witnesses for the prosecution. They both claim to be Yugoslav Communists. One of them, by name Suleiman, stated that he met one of the accused Soviet citizens, Kornilov, at the Soviet Embassy in Ankara in September 1941. On the other hand, the Police Register in Ankara shows that Kornilov arrived in the capital for the first time in January 1942. The trial itself is in its preliminary stages. It has all the features of an incoherent "Who-done-it," and there can be no doubt that the two Soviet citizens will be completely cleared.

The trial, of course, occasioned great jubilation in Germany. There is an unhappy air of rejoicing, not unsimilar to the one that prevailed during the Reichstag trial. But the Turks are not likely to be stampeded by political considerations. If there are any Van der Lubbes they will be exposed.

The outrage was obviously intended to create bad blood between the Soviet Union and Turkey. Ethics

apart, it is difficult to imagine that the Soviet Union would commit a hostile act in a country whose neutrality coincides with her own interests. It casts no aspersion on Turkish justice to remember the notorious preparations of the Italians to bomb the Vatican in the event of a British attack on Rome.

It will need more than a bomb to bring the nation of Ataturk to Berchtesgaden. It will need more than a phoney explosion to break the traditional friendship which Kemal considered an essential perquisite of Turkish foreign policy. He once said, addressing the Turkish Parliament:

> There are two Kemals. One is that sitting before you, the Mustapha Kemal of flesh and blood who will pass away. There is another whom I cannot call me. It is not I, this Mustapha Kemal. It is you—all you present here. I stand for these dreams of yours. My life's work is to make them come true.

While we are on the subject of explosions it will be recollected that von Papen himself has handled more than diplomatic dynamite. He was expelled from the United States in 1916, and in his absence was tried by the United States Federal Court on charges of secret plotting and preparation of mutiny in the strategic area of the Welland Canal. He and his associates planted bombs on munition ships destined for Great Britain. He committed arson. He did his best to drag the United States into war against the Allies.

When Papen comes before the bar of history perhaps the bomb that singed his wife's clothes and caused him temporary deafness will be explained as an innocent reversion to habit.

THE PASSAGE THROUGH TURKEY

What does this intensive activity against Turkey indicate? Why does Bulgaria growl, and a bomb explode near von Papen? Obviously, sooner or later Turkey will be faced with two demands. She will be asked to grant passage to Nazi forces for an attack on the Caucasus; she will be requested to open the Dardanelles to the Italian Fleet.

The Turks have given an unequivocal answer in advance to von Papen's probings on these two points. The tantalizing question therefore remains: Will Hitler seek to establish by force what he has failed to obtain by cajolery and threats?

Hitler does not underestimate the Turks. Nor does he underestimate his difficulties in attacking Turkey. Nothing will persuade him to dissipate his forces in a campaign that might bring him poor dividends. It is on such hopes that Turkey's neutrality rests. Hitler is not fond of ditches, it is argued, and to cross the narrow Straits of the Bosporus would involve considerable losses. The Turks have fortified both shores. Significantly, they rejected a lower tender submitted by Krupps to erect fortifications and preferred the higher tender put forward by the British. These defence works are known to be formidable.

In these days of mechanized warfare great reliance cannot be put on terrain, but much of Turkey is extremely mountainous. The distance between the Bulgarian frontier and the Caucasus is about 870 miles as the crow flies, but an army seeking to advance would have to cover something like 1200 miles, as there are no roads

running directly west to east. Railway communications are extremely poor, especially in Eastern Anatolia. There is no direct railway connexion between the Bosporus and the Soviet Caucasus. The one-track railway from Erzerum to Kars and Tiflis would hardly be sufficient to meet the needs of a large invading force.

Kemal Ataturk did not raise the capital city of Ankara amid an arid and malaria-infested swamp for nothing. He made it a symbol of the new Turkey. He planned the well-spaced gardens and modern white-stoned Government buildings as a challenge to nature. He brought water down to the city from a distant lake. Ankara, he said, would be far from the lazy heat of Istanbul and its intrigues. Turkish industries and armament factories, like the capital, lie far inland. Only paratroops, certainly in the initial stages, could make any attack upon them.

If Turkey could put up a resistance of even a few weeks British armies from Syria and Iraq as well as the Red Army from the Caucasus could move to Turkey's aid and perhaps create that condition of stalemate which Hitler wishes to avoid at all costs.

In such circumstances any campaign that Hitler undertook against Turkey would inevitably become a major one, using up the men and resources which he needs to further his aims on the European front of the Soviet Union. On such evidence it is clear that the route through Turkey would by no means provide a short cut to the Caucasus, and it is possible that Hitler will abandon any attempt to force a passage. Instead of undertaking a costly campaign, he may content himself

with driving the Turks into the interior and holding them there. The Italian Fleet would then be free to pass through the Dardanelles. Without the presence of a fleet superior to the Red Navy in the Black Sea, all hope of a sea-borne invasion against the Caucasus would have to be abandoned.

THE BLACK SEA ROUTE

The primary advantage of a sea-borne attack on the Caucasus would be that it would avoid a direct assault on Turkey. This point has probably been offered as a peace bait by von Papen, but it has failed to move the Turks from their declaration made at Montreux in 1936 in which they pledged themselves to guard the Straits against the entry of all belligerent warships.

German preparations for an invasion of the Caucasus were made as long ago as last September. The Nazi Admiral Raeder made an extensive tour of the Bulgarian and Rumanian coasts, and supervised the preparation of invasion bases at Varna, Burgas, and Constanza. The dilapidated Bulgarian ports were specially reconditioned, and submarine slipways were built. E-boats were brought down the Danube as well as submarine parts, ready to be assembled for the intended sea invasion of the Caucasus which was to have coincided with von Rundstedt's drive into the Ukraine last autumn. The honour of escorting the invasion armada was to fall to the small Rumanian Navy, and a landing was planned somewhere near Batum or farther north at Novorossiisk.

The Red Fleet had been sunk by Goebbels as often as the ***Ark Royal***. But despite this, Raeder held back his invasion fleet. The Red Navy took the offensive and

bombarded Constanza ; it also gave support to the land forces operating in the Crimea ; it carried reinforcements to Sebastopol ; its guns pounded the Germans during their retreat from Rostov ; it assisted the Red Army in the reoccupation of the Kerch Peninsula.

The Red Fleet has played an even more spectacular if less publicized role. It has hampered the transport of men and oil to the German army in the Ukraine. German and Rumanian tankers are forced to cling to the coastline, within range, that is, of their shore defences. Their route is strewn with mines, so that a whole fleet of minesweepers must precede the convoys. Italian merchant vessels passing through the Dardanelles to Varna and Burgas have frequently turned back when they sighted units of the Red Fleet waiting for them outside Turkish territorial waters. The magnificent resistance of that stronghold of the Crimea, Sebastopol, has been aided by reinforcements of men and material brought by the Red Fleet. Those famous fighters, the Red Marines, have added yet another chapter to the Revolutionary story of sacrifice and heroism.

Admiral Nicholas Kuznetsov, the People's Commissar for the Soviet Navy, is not only the Red Fleet's administrative authority, but also its war chief. For an admiral he is a young man by all standards. He is thirty-nine years of age. For a number of years he captained the show ship of the Black Sea Fleet, ***The Red Ukraine***, and he knows the strategic problems governing this area intimately. His reputed reliance on submarines may provide a very unpleasant surprise for any sea invader.

GREATER BULGARIA

For the second time this century Bulgaria enters a war on Germany's side. To-day she constitutes a strategic base for an attack on the Soviet Union, the Soviet Caucasus in particular. She is also playing an important part in Hitler's war of nerves against Turkey.

The Bulgarians are a credulous people. More than 80 per cent. of them are peasants, and peasants are traditionally pacific. Their warlike emotions are difficult to stir up. They have fought best when they fought for their freedom in the days when they sought independence from Turkish rule. They are also an extremely religious people and have never been able to forget that the birthplaces of their patron saints have lain far beyond their borders in Greek and Turkish Thrace, for example. And a king or a general or Hitler has only to promise them the return of these birthplaces, and they grow warlike and sentimental.

But they are a confused people, too confused for Hitler. They have always admired the Russians. They have always felt grateful to them in memory of those Russian armies that helped them to gain their liberation in the last century.

How is it that, despite these traditional feelings towards the 'big Slav brother,' Bulgaria has allowed her territory to become a pawn in a conflict which does not concern her, in a war which has already brought ruin and starvation to many of her people ?

IN FATHER'S FOOTSTEPS

Bulgaria came out of the last war a disillusioned, embittered, and impoverished nation. Fooled by her

German 'Tsar,' Ferdinand the Fox, this small nation of some six million people tasted not only the dregs of defeat, but also the economic depredation and common pilfering practised by her German and Austro-Hungarian allies.

The war ended with the exile of Ferdinand, and his son Boris became king. Ferdinand went to a comfortable Doorn and spent the rest of his life studying the habits of birds. Boris, it has been reported, is already thinking of his Doorn. He has asked his master, in the event of German defeat, to provide him with a legacy and a home, a compliment which Hitler no doubt did not relish.

After the Great War a dozen parties appeared under all sorts of vote-catching names such as the Citizens' Party, the Historical Party, the People's Party, not to mention the Liberals and Democrats. They all had a ring of progress about them.

The peasants, however, wanted leaders who made more than a noise that sounded like progress and reform. They united into the People's Agrarian League, and in the elections of 1923 this peasant party held as many as 212 seats out of a possible 243 in the Sobranje—the Bulgarian Parliament.

Great was the triumph of the villagers. The "Green Revolution" had been accomplished by constitutional and not revolutionary means. Shepherds and ploughmen had ousted the bogus professors.

The new era demanded not only a fair redistribution of land but a cordial relationship with Bulgaria's neighbours. Stambolisky, the energetic peasant Prime Minis-

ter, even negotiated with Soviet Russia, the pariah of those times.

The Communist alliance with the Agrarians was an uneasy partnership. Had it been more solid there is no doubt that the subsequent course of events would have prevented the reactionary conspiracy which broke out in June 1923. The professional politicians and army officers, alarmed at Stambolisky's boast that he had come to stay for forty years, called upon the I.M.R.O. (Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization) to oust their opponents from office by force. A situation somewhat similar to that which later occurred in Spain proved the folly of Stambolisky's open-hearted treatment of hostile and armed elements.

This I.M.R.O. recruited from the sweepings of Macedonian gutters, had for a while played a somewhat romantic role as a brigand force occupied with the laudable and patriotic object of regaining for Bulgaria the birthplaces of her saints, lost in wars against Greece and Serbia. But now this organization, influenced by the reactionary Professor Tsankoff, was an early forerunner of Hitler's Brownshirts. It performed its saintly mission by massacring the Agrarian leaders in particularly horrible circumstances, and then returned to the hills to continue its puerile vendetta against the Greeks and the Serbs. Tsankoff's terror lasted for three years. It exceeded in brutality even Admiral Horthy's 'pacification' of Hungary.

After the suppression of the Agrarians the Communists were led to the slaughter. They replied by blowing up the cathedral in Sofia in the hope of sending

King Boris and Tsankoff to their ancestors. Men and women were herded from the villages and thrown into army trucks. Planks were nailed over the living mass. Those that remained returned to their hard labour. The millionaires and fraudulent politicians built white palaces on the summer resort of Mount Tchamkoria. Bulgaria returned to the fold of 'civilized nations.' The lesson was not lost on either Prince Paul or King Carol.

Tsankoff's rule of ruin brought the inevitable reaction. A more respectable Government followed under Adrei Laipcheff, who promised to rule "with gentleness and kindness." Then came Malinoff in 1931—cultured, genial, and ineffectual. Georghiev tried to do better in 1933. "The workman is not a slave but a national hero," said Georghiev. He made an attempt to break the I.M.R.O 's international and domestic interference, but at this time Mussolini was enjoying his heyday. He supplied the I.M.R.O. and its twin, the Croatian Ustachi, with liberal funds, and used them to create dissension between Yugoslavia and Bulgaria. Alexander of Yugoslavia fell a victim to one of the Duce's Balkan desperadoes in 1934: It was time, Boris thought, that he should be king. Why should Mussolini pour gold into the I.M.R.O's coffers when his own were so empty?

Boris married an Italian princess. He rode on the footplate of locomotives. He wanted to be as popular as the Kings of Norway and Denmark. He became a dictator a year after Hitler had come to power in Germany.

Bulgaria needed a strong democratic Government. Instead she was settled with a despot who retained a few

of the outward trappings of democracy, such as a tame Parliament—'elected' by skilfully organized elections But, despite the control, Agrarians and Democrats filtered into the Parliament. Boris also read ***Mein Kampf*** diligently every night. As Italy's star began to wane, and the pro-Italian clamour of his sister, the Princess Eudoxia changed to one of support for the Nazis, the economic ***Blitzkrieg*** of the Nazis fell heavily on Bulgaria.

The free distribution of the ***Stuermer*** and ***Voelkischer Beobachter*** to German-trained officers and German-speaking professionals helped to pave the way towards economic collaboration. The Germans always whispered "culture" to the chicken before they wrung its neck.

But the fundamental cause of Bulgaria's economic enslavement rests very largely on her geography. She was surrounded by neighbours as economically poor and as pre-dominantly agricultural as herself. They could not buy Bulgaria's produce, and in 1929 the world's free market broke down. The Ottawa Agreement made the tariff walls still more impregnable. Barter remained the only solution for Bulgaria. But who was there to barter with? In these circumstances it was not difficult for Dr Schacht to offer German manufactures in exchange for Bulgaria's wheat and tobacco. German exports to Bulgaria rose from 38 per cent. in 1933 to 61 per cent. in 1936.

Of course the Germans fixed a favourable rate of exchange for themselves. They unloaded on Bulgaria not only the proverbial aspirin and mouth-organ but enormous stocks of textiles, a commodity which Bulgaria's own industries provided in adequate quantities. The

German armament industry generously disgorged all its obsolete tanks, guns, planes, and submarines on the Bulgarians in exchange for ever-modern wheat and tobacco.

It is not remarkable, therefore, that the German-educated Professor Filov was able with such ease to sell his country to the Nazis in March 1941. The victim was bound hand and foot. There was not only a revolver at its head but a threat to take away the bread from its stomach.

Nor is it remarkable that a year later, on March 28, Bulgaria declared war on the Soviet Union. The formula read, "The first condition for the establishment of this New Order is the destruction of Bolshevism which still forms one of the greatest threats to Europe and European civilization."

The leading members of the Opposition, whether they are Agrarians, Communists, or anti-German Democrats, pro-Russian officers and officials, have been clapped into concentration camps. A few like Kosta Todoroff, the present leader of the Peasants' Party, are in exile. They hope to raise a free Bulgarian organization among the hundred thousand Bulgarians living in North and South America.

Boris is tolerated by the Germans in the same way as Antonescu. So long as Boris and his Ministers prove amenable to German demands, the National and Socialist Party of Tsankoff and the more extreme Iron Guard-like party of the Ratnizi will be kept in the background. The Russophile spectre, however, haunts Boris and his quislings. The extent of these feelings was accurately

gauged by Mr Earle, the American Ambassador, who returned from Sofia early in 1942. He said:

> Don't you believe that Bulgaria is Germany's friend. Eighty-six per cent. of the population hate Germany and are lost in admiration of the Russians. But Bulgaria exists as an independent country only by the grace of the Gestapo.
>
> The Bulgarians have just had two terrible shocks. The first was to find that Germany had forced them into declaring war on America and Britain because Bulgaria dare not declare war on Russia.
>
> If she did, within a couple of weeks her army would be fighting in the ranks of the Russians except those engaged in using their arms to carry through a revolution at home.

There is little likelihood, therefore, that the Germans will send the Bulgarians to fight directly against the Soviet Union. Rather they will be used to threaten Turkey and to relieve the Germans from their police duties in Thrace and Serbia. But it seems that some Bulgarian soldiers have taken their policing very seriously. They have been joining in ever-increasing numbers the forces fighting for Balkan freedom, the valiant army of General Mihailovich.

Even the Bulgarian newspapers cannot hide the sabotage and arson which has spread over the land. The newspaper *Zarya* admitted that in the first three weeks of August last there were as many as thirty-five fires in Sofia. Grain destined for Germany, reports another newspaper *Utro*, has been set on fire. The firemen apparently took their time over the job. A war loan floated by the Bulgarian Government has yielded but a tenth of the expected sum. The Nazi administration in Sofia dares not admit the killing and disappearance of German officers. So periodically democrats are

rechristened "Jews and Communists" one hour before they are taken out to be shot.

THE CAUCASUS THROUGH THE BACK DOOR.

There can be little doubt that Hitler hoped to use Rommel's army to drive through Egypt and Palestine, penetrate towards the Mosul oilfields, and there create a base from which to strike at the Caucasus. The attack was to have coincided with the German drive into the Ukraine.

But this back-door entrance was frustrated by British and Imperial forces. There is, however, another opening which offers considerable opportunities of arriving on the south side of the Caucasus—through Syria or Palestine and thence through Iraq to Soviet Armenia and Azerbaijan.

The preparations in the Dodecanese, in Rhodes, Crete, Greece, and Bulgaria, have no doubt been made with a view to envelop Turkey and serve as parachute and sea invasion bases for Syria.

The intensification of air attacks on Malta show that Hitler is anxious to remove this obstacle from the path of convoys streaming with reinforcements to Rommel. Rommel's next attack in Libya will no doubt coincide with action against the Near East.

If Hitler is bent on avoiding Turkey, or if by attacking Turkey he hopes to draw the main Allied forces to her defence, the Syria-Palestine front would present an ideal flank to attack.

Moreover, there are political advantages to be gained from such an attack. Rashid Ali and the Mufti of Jerusalem have not been fattened in Rome merely to

display Fascist hospitality. A skeleton government, complete with nominees of quislings hiding in Syria and Palestine, has already been drawn up. A ceaseless barrage of propaganda, of promises of a Pan-Arabian New Order, have already been flung into the preliminary battle. The return of Laval to political power in Vichy France has given rise to speculation whether the French Fleet will be used in an attack on Syria.

The advantages of a successful attack on Syria and Palestine may be summarized as follows. It would :

(1) avoid Turkey ;
(2) threaten to deprive Britain of the Mosul and Persian oilfields ;
(3) aim to cut the route to the Soviet Union via the Persian Gulf ;
(4) open up a base for operations against the Caucasus ;
(5) create the possibility of shaking hands with the Japanese in India.

It seems, therefore, that this fourth route is potentially the most dangerous of all. That preparations and dispositions have been made to meet the eventuality of an attack goes without saying. The railway-line running from Cairo through Palestine and Syria and thence to Scutari on the Bosporus is shortly due to be completed, and will considerably assist in the defence of this vulnerable front.

But a purely defensive attitude merely provides Hitler with an opportunity to finish his preparations and select his season. The spring offensive has dissolved into a myth. The summer offensive can go the same way.

ERSATZ PANIC OR ERSATZ OFFENSIVE ?

At the height of last winter's campaign in the Soviet Union Hitler gave his broadcasters a free hand to describe the terrible winter conditions prevailing on the Russian front. Here is an example of the sort of horror talk that was put over the ether, "The floor is freezingly cold and infested with fleas, lice, and bugs. Snow, driven like a thousand needles, works its way into marching soldiers, who, if they are not careful, may suddenly lose a nose or foot."

Let us make no mistake. Hitler did not give out bad news because he was honest. He had made a mistake in thinking that he could smash Soviet resistance by October. This over-confidence punished the German troops severely. Caught in a winter which even by Russian standards was bitterly cruel, Hitler had no time to manufacture the warm clothing his army demanded. Frantic appeals were made to the civilian population to strip itself of every woollen garment. But the weakness of human nature, even German human nature, prevailed. The initial collections were a failure. How was he to combat this un-Nordic behaviour ?

He created a synthetic panic.

He gave orders for his propagandists to paint the most lurid picture they could ; he terrorized his own population. "Hand over the woollens and save your brothers and fathers from the dreadful Russian cold !"

This is a classic example of a synthetic panic. But, like every panic, synthetic or not, it required a good brake. Goebbels was waiting with the trumpets. By giving out astronomical figures, by thanking the popula-

tion profusely for their patriotism and their devotion to the Fuhrer, the panic was called off.

The Germans are remarkable chemists. They have discovered not only *ersatz* rubber, synthetic chocolate, and wool made from milk ; on a parallel formula, Hitler has manufactured his synthetic panics—yes, and his synthetic victories too. Rommel, for example, tried to put a synthetic victory over his soldiers in Libya ; in order to make them fight better, he announced one day that Moscow had been captured and the Red Army driven beyond the Urals.

German morale has been boosted on synthetic panics. It has been fed on a synthetic spring offensive. But Hitler has been unable to make synthetic Germans. Millions of them have perished in the Soviet Union. Thousands are being slaughtered in the dark alleys of Occupied Europe. The hope and belief of Europe's oppressed millions is the beginning of the Allied offensive that must not, that cannot, be an *ersatz* offensive.

"WE HAVE A RENDEZVOUS WITH DESTINY"—ROOSEVELT

It is not to derogate the importance of other theatres of war that we have suggested that the coming German drive will have to be met and defeated in the Soviet Union and the Middle East. Here is the key, the pivot, of Axis strategy.

There are many battles which can be lost and fought again and won. But not this battle. This is Hitler's Second Front against the World, against the black man as against the white, against every hemisphere, against the Chinaman, and ultimately against the Italian and

the Japanese. For who holds the cross-roads of Asia and Europe, who dominates the land mass east and west, who possesses the great oil-wells of the Caucasus and the Middle East, he will be in a position to decide the history of the next millennium.

This Hitler knows; this he has proclaimed. "The next thousand years belong to us," he says. He is a madman. But his machines are not mad. "I shall conquer Europe," he said when France fell. "because youth is afraid to die. Men fear my Armageddon." He does not say that now that he has buried a whole army of young men in the steppes of the Ukraine and the forests around Moscow.

Men of all nationalities and of all creeds have contributed their blood to the great river of suffering which they believe will finally drown the Nazi Moloch. This thing goes fearful of victory and defeat alike. For defeat will extinguish it, and victory no less for sheer lack of victims. There is nothing more terrible than inertia for the Nazis and their machines. They will be compelled to take their own lives with their unbusied hands, learned in no other craft than death. There is no resurrection for them. Summoned from the graveyard, they will return to the graveyard.

But the free men of Europe ask in their bodies' pain for steel, so that even if they must die they can die with a weapon in their hands, made by the free labour, by the imagination and will of men in whose name it was once promised that liberty should not perish from the face of the earth.

The fate of the Caucasus in the crucible of a world war may seem a small thing. In ancient days the Caucasians filled rude clay vessels with their native oil, lit these primitive Molotov cocktails, and hurled them at the aggressor. To-day their fate is not an isolated fate.

However bravely the Red Army and the whole Soviet people fight, however much Occupied Europe resists, they will look anxiously to the West, where they believe a new front will be formed against the common foe. They see him for the first time on the defensive, sending his best general to reorganize and refurbish the defences and citadels depleted by the war in the East. For the first time they see the Nazis stung to fear and fury by the British Commando raids. They know that guns and tanks and aeroplanes are being made, weapons of surgery, waiting to cut out the cancer from the world's tormented heart This is the year of destiny, of the united fates of Europe, of the world, when the sky above the Nazis must darken with aeroplanes, the earth on which the Nazis stand must tremble with the anger of tanks. And who shall guide these weapons of deliverance but the men whose fathers heard Lincoln's words at Gettysburg, the men who are filled with Churchill's indomitable spirit of attack?

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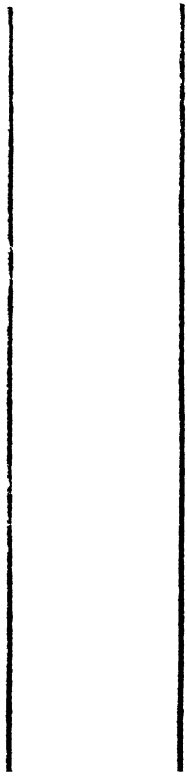
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